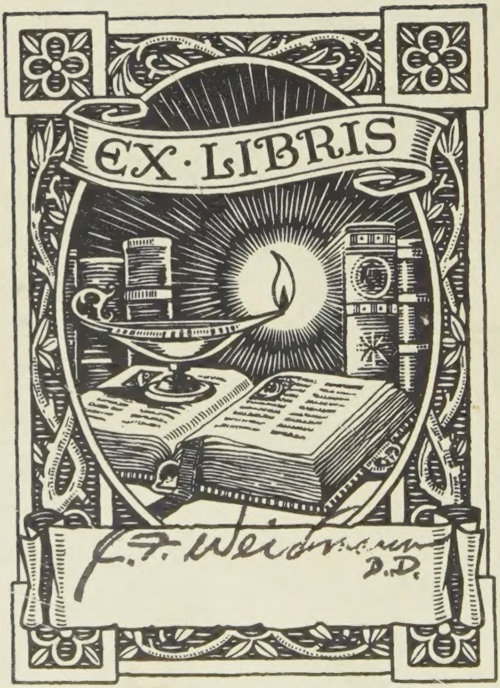
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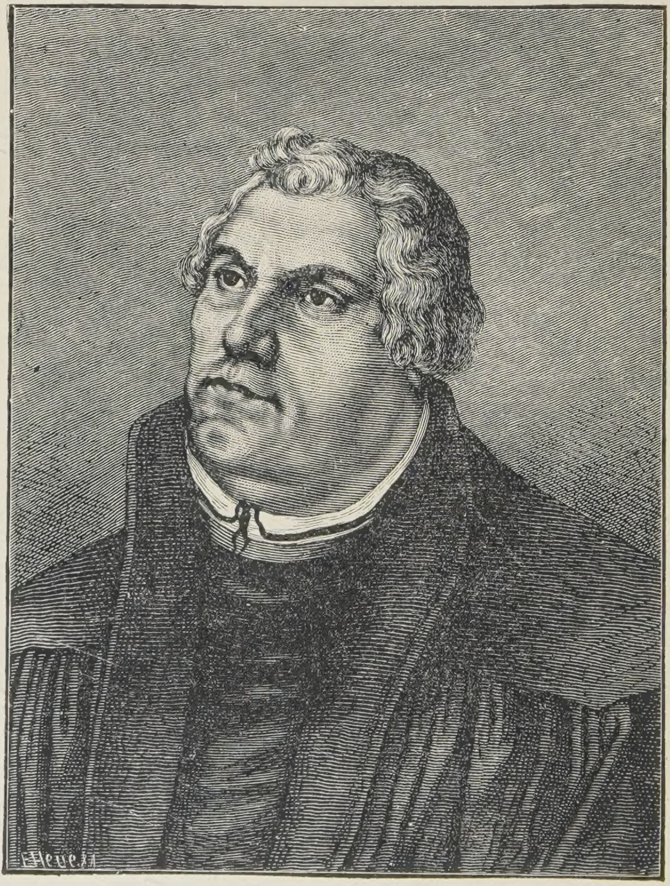

LUTHER.

(From a Portrait by Cranach in the Town Church at Weimar.)

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LIFE OF LUTHER

BY

JULIUS KÖSTLIN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS from AUTHENTIC SOURCES

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1913

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AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

TO

MY DEAR WIFE

PAULINE

WITH THE WORDS OF LUTHER

'God's highest gift on earth is to have a pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping wife

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

No German has ever influenced so powerfully as Luther the religious life, and, through it, the whole history, of his people; none has ever reflected so faithfully, in his whole personal character and conduct, the peculiar features of that life and history, and been enabled by that very means to render us a service so effectual and so popular. If we recall to fresh life and remembrance the great men of past ages, we Germans shall always put Luther in the van: for us Protestants, the object of our love and veneration, who will not prevent, however, or prejudice the most candid historical inquiry; for others, a rock of offence, whom even slander and falsehood will never overcome.

I have already in my larger work, 'Martin Luther: his Life and Writings,' 2 vols., 1875, put together all the materials available for that subject, together with the necessary references, historical and critical, and have endeavoured to explain and illustrate at length the subject matter of his various writings. I now offer this sketch of his life to the wide circle of what are called educated German readers. For further explanations and proofs of statements herein contained I would refer them to my larger work. Further investigation has prompted me to make some alterations, but only a few, in matters of detail.

For the illustrations I beg to express my warm thanks, and those of the publisher, to the friends who have kindly assisted us in the work.

J. KÖSTLIN,
Professor at the University of Halle-Wittenberg.

Oct. 31, 1881, the anniversary of Luther's 95 Theses.

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LUTHER'S LIFE.

PART I.

LUTHER'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH UP TO HIS ENTERING THE CONVENT.—1483-1505.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

On the 10th of November, 1483, their first child was born to a young couple, Hans and Margaret Luder, at Eisleben, in Saxony, where the former earned his living as a miner. That child was Martin Luther.

His parents had shortly before removed thither from Möhra, the old home of his family. This place, called in old records More and Möre, lies among the low hills where the Thuringian chain of wooded heights runs out westwards towards the valley of the Werra, about eight miles south of Eisenach, and four miles north of Salzungen, close to the railway which now connects these two towns. Luther thus comes from the very centre of Germany. The ruler there was the Elector of Saxony.

Möhra was an insignificant village, without even a priest of its own, and with only a chapel affiliated to the church of the neighbouring parish. The population consisted for the most part of independent peasants, with house and farmstead, cattle and horses. Mining, moreover, was being carried on there in the fifteenth century, and copper was being discovered in the copper schist, of which the names of Schieferhalden and Schlackenhaufen still survive to remind us. The soil was not very favourable for agriculture, and consisted partly of moorland, which gave the place its name. Those peasants who possessed land were obliged to work extremely hard. They were a strong and sturdy race.

From this peasantry sprang Luther. 'I am a peasant's son,' he said once to Melancthon in conversation. 'My father, grandfather—all my ancestors were thorough peasants.'

His father's relations were to be found in several families and houses in Möhra, and even scattered in the country around. The name was then written Luder, and also Ludher, Lüder, and Leuder. We find the name of Luther for the first time as that of Martin Luther, the Professor at Wittemberg, shortly before he entered on his war of Reformation, and from him it was adopted by the other branches of the family. Originally it was not a surname, but a Christian name, identical with Lothar, which signifies one renowned in battle. A very singular coat of arms, consisting of a cross-bow, with a rose on each side, had been handed down through; no doubt, many generations in the family, and is to be seen on the seal of Luther's brother James. The origin of these arms is unknown; the device leads one to conclude that the family must have blended with another by intermarriage, or by succeeding to its property. Contemporaneous records exist to show how conspicuously the relatives of Luther, at Möhra and in the district, shared the sturdy character of the local peasantry, always ready for self-help, and equally ready for fisticuffs. Firmly and resolutely, for many generations, and amidst grievous

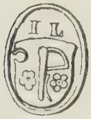


Fig. 1.
Coat of arms.

persecutions and disorders, such as visited Möhra in particular during the Thirty Years' War, this race maintained its ground. Three families of Luther exist there at this day, who are all engaged in agriculture; and a striking likeness to the features of Martin Luther may still be traced in many of his descendants, and even in other inhabitants of Möhra. Not less remarkable, as noted by one who is familiar with the present people of the place, are the depth of feeling and strong common sense which distinguish them, in general, to this day. The house in which Luther's grandfather lived, or rather that which was afterwards built on the site, can still, it is believed, but not with certainty, be identified. Near this house stands now a statue of Luther in bronze.

At Möhra, then, Luther's father, Hans, had grown up to manhood. His grandfather's name was Henry, but of him we hear nothing during Luther's time. His grandmother died in 1521. His mother's maiden name was Ziegler; we afterwards find relations of hers at Eisenach; the other old account, which made her maiden name Lindemann, probably originated from confusing her with Luther's grandmother.

What brought Hans to Eisleben was the copper mining, which here, and especially in the county of Mansfeld, to which Eisleben belonged, had prospered to an extent never known around Möhra, and was even then in full swing of activity. At Eisleben, the miners' settlements soon formed two new quarters of the town. Hans had, as we know, two brothers, and very possibly there were more of the family, so that the paternal inheritance had to be divided. He was evidently the eldest of the brothers, of whom one, Heinz, or Henry, who owned a farm of his own, was still living in 1540, ten years after the death of Hans. But at Möhra the law of primogeniture, which vests the possession of the land in the eldest son, was not recognised: either the property was equally divided, or, as was customary in other parts of the country, the estate fell to the share of the youngest. This custom was referred to in after years by Luther in his remark that in this world, according to civil law, the youngest son is the heir of his father's house.

We must not omit to notice the other reasons which have been assigned for his leaving his old home. It has been repeatedly asserted, in recent times, and even by Protestant writers, that the father of our great Reformer had sought to escape the consequences of a crime committed by him at Möhra. The matter stands thus: In Luther's lifetime his Catholic opponent Witzel happened to call out to Jonas, a friend of Luther's, in the heat of a quarrel, 'I might call the father of your Luther a murderer.' Twenty years later the anonymous author of a polemical work which appeared at Paris actually calls the Reformer 'the son of the Möhra assassin.' With these exceptions, not a trace of any story of this kind, in the writings of either friend or foe, can be found in that or in the following century. It was at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in an official report on mining at Möhra, that the story, evidently based on oral tradition, assumed all at once a more definite shape; the statement being that Luther's father had accidentally killed a peasant, who was minding some horses grazing. This story has been told to travellers in our own time by people of Möhra, who have gone so far as to point out the fatal meadow. We are forced to notice it, not, indeed, as being in the least authenticated, but simply on account of the authority recently claimed for the tradition. For it is plain that what is now a matter of hearsay at Möhra was a story wholly unknown there not many years ago, was first introduced by strangers, and has since met with several variations at their hands. The idea of a criminal flying from Möhra to Mansfeld, which was only a few miles off, and was equally subject to the Elector of Saxony, is absurd, and in this case is strangely inconsistent with the honourable position soon attained, as we shall see, by Hans Luther himself at Mansfeld. Moreover, the very fact that Witzel's spiteful remark was long known to Luther's enemies, coupled with the fact that they never turned it to account, shows plainly how little they ventured to make it a matter of serious reproach. Luther during his lifetime had to hear from them that his father was a Bohemian heretic, his mother a loose woman, employed at the baths, and he himself a changeling, born of his mother and the Devil. How triumphantly would they have talked about the murder or manslaughter committed by his father, had the charge admitted of proof! Whatever occurrence may have given rise to such a story, we have no right to ascribe it either to any fault or any crime of the father. More on this subject it is needless to add; the two strange statements we have mentioned do not attempt to establish any definite connection between the supposed crime and the removal to Eisleben.

The day, and even the very hour, when her first-born came into the world, Luther's mother carefully treasured in her mind. It was between eleven and twelve o'clock at night. Agreeably to the custom of the time, he was baptised in the Church of St. Peter the next day. It was the feast of St. Martin, and he was called after that saint. Tradition still identifies the house where he was born; it stands in the lower part of the town, close to St. Peter's Church. Several conflagrations, which devastated Eisleben, have left it undestroyed. But of the original building only the walls of the ground-floor remain: within these there is a room facing the street, which is pointed out as the one where Luther first saw the light. The church was rebuilt soon after his birth, and was then called after St. Peter and St. Paul; the present font still retains, it is said, some portions of the old one.

When the child was six months old, his parents removed to the town of Mansfeld, about six miles off. So great was the number of the miners who were then crowding to Eisleben, the most important place in the county, that we can well understand how Luther's father failed there to realise his expectations, and went in search of better prospects to the other capital of the rich mining district. Here, at Mansfeld, or, more strictly, at Lower Mansfeld, as it is called, from its position, and to distinguish it from Cloister-Mansfeld, he came among a people whose whole life and labour were devoted to mining. The town itself lay on the banks of a stream, inclosed by hills, on the edge of the Harz country. Above it towered the stately castle of the Counts, to whom the place belonged. The character

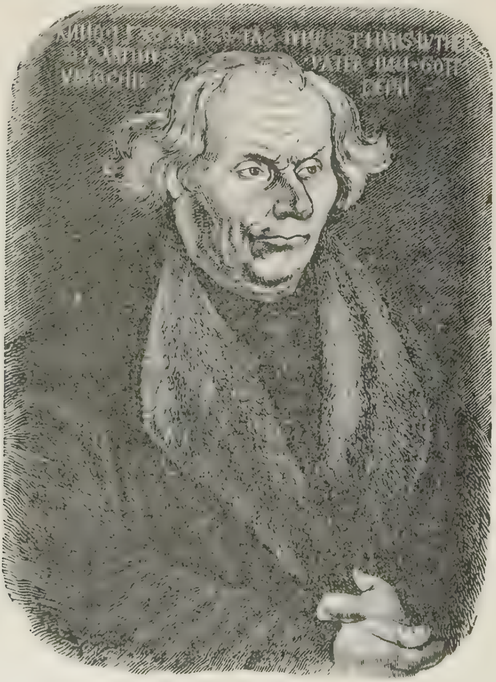


FIG. 2.—HANS LUTHER.

of the scenery is more severe, and the air harsher than in the neighbourhood of Möhra. Luther himself called his Mansfeld countrymen sons of the Harz. In the main, these Harz people are much rougher than the Thuringians.

Here also, at first, Luther's parents found it a hard struggle to get on. 'My father,' said the Reformer, 'was a poor miner; my mother carried in all the wood upon her back; they worked the flesh off their bones to bring us up: no one nowadays would ever have such endurance. It must not, however, be forgotten that carrying wood in these days was less a sign of poverty than now. Gradually their affairs improved. The whole working of the mines belonged to

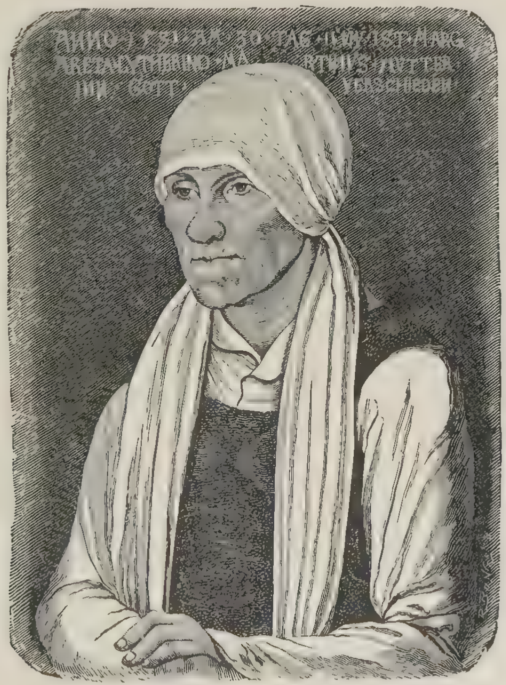


Fig. 3.—Margaret Luther.

the Counts, and they leased out single portions, called smelting furnaces, sometimes for lives, sometimes for a term of years. Hans Luther succeeded in obtaining two furnaces, though only on a lease of years. He must have risen in the esteem of his town-fellows even more rapidly than in outward prosperity.

The magistracy of the town consisted of a bailiff, the chief landowners, and four of the community. Among these four Hans Luther appears in a public document as early as 1491. His children were numerous enough to cause him constant anxiety for their maintenance and education : there were at least seven of them, for we know of three brothers and three sisters of the Reformer. The Luther family never rose to be one of the rich families of Mansfeld, who possessed furnaces by inheritance, and in time became landowners ; but they associated with them, and in some cases numbered them among their intimate friends. The old Hans was also personally known to his Counts, and was much esteemed by them. In 1520 the Reformer publicly appealed to their personal acquaintance with his father and himself, against the slanders circulated about his origin. Hans, in course of time, bought himself a substantial dwelling-house in the principal street of the town. A small portion of it remains standing to this day. There is still to be seen a gateway, with a well-built arch of sandstone, which bears the Luther arms of cross-bow and roses, and the inscription J.L. 1530. This was, no doubt, the work of James Luther, in the year when his father Hans died, and he took possession of the property. It is only quite recently that the stone has so far decayed as to cause the arms and part of the inscription to peel off.

The earliest personal accounts that we have of Luther's parents, date from the time when they already shared in the honour and renown acquired by their son. They frequently visited him at Wittenberg, and moved with simple dignity among his friends. The father, in particular, Melancthon describes as a man, who, by purity of character and conduct, won for himself universal affection and esteem. Of the mother he says that the worthy woman, amongst other virtues, was distinguished above all for her modesty, her fear of God, and her constant communion with God in prayer. Luther's friend, the Court-preacher Spalatin, spoke of her as a rare and exemplary woman. As regards their personal appearance, the Swiss Kessler describes them in 1522 as small and short persons, far surpassed by their son Martin in height and build; he adds, also, that they were dark-complexioned. Five years later their portraits were painted by Lucas Cranach: these are now to be seen in the Wartburg, and are the only ones of this couple which we possess.[1] In these portraits, the features of both the parents have a certain hardness; they indicate severe toil during a long life. At the same time, the mouth and eyes of the father wear an intelligent, lively, energetic, and clever expression. He has also, as his son Martin observed, retained to old age a 'strong and hardy frame.' The mother looks more wearied by life, but resigned, quiet, and meditative. Her thin face, with its large bones, presents a mixture of mildness and gravity. Spalatin was amazed, on seeing her for the first time in 1522, how much Luther resembled her in bearing and features. Indeed, a certain likeness is observable between him and her portrait, in the eyes and the lower part of the face. At the same time, from what is known of the appearance of the Luthers who lived afterwards at Möhra, he must also have resembled his father's family.

---

[1] Strange to say, subsequently and even in our own days, a portrait of Martin Luther's wife in her old age has been mistaken for one of his mother.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLDAYS.

As to the childhood of Martin Luther, and his further growth and mental development, at Mansfeld and elsewhere, we have absolutely no information from others to enlighten us. For this portion of his life we can only avail ourselves of occasional and isolated remarks of his own, partly met with in his writings, partly culled from his lips by Melancthon, or his physician Ratzeberger, or his pupil Mathesius, or other friends, and by them recorded for the benefit of posterity. These remarks are very imperfect, but are significant enough to enable us to understand the direction which his inner life had taken, and which prepared him for his future calling. Nor less significant is the fact that those opponents who, from the commencement of his war with the Church, tracked out his origin, and sought therein for evidence to his detriment, have failed, for their part, to contribute anything new whatever to the history of his childhood and youth, although, as the Reformer, he had plenty of enemies at his own and his parents' home, and several of the Counts of Mansfeld, in particular, continued in the Romish Church. There was nothing, therefore, dark or discreditable, at any rate, to be found attaching either to his home or to his own youth.

It is said that childhood is a Paradise. Luther in after years found it joyful and edifying to contemplate the happiness of those little ones who know neither the cares of daily life nor the troubles of the soul, and enjoy with light hearts the good thing which God has given them. But in his own reminiscences of life, so far as he has given them, no such sunny childhood is reflected. The hard time, which his parents at first had to struggle through at Mansfeld, had to be shared in by the children, and the lot fell most hardly on the eldest. As the former spent their days in hard toil, and persevered in it with unflinching severity, the tone of the house was unusually earnest and severe. The upright, honourable, industrious father was honestly resolved to make a useful man of his son, and enable him to rise higher than himself. He strictly maintained at all times his paternal authority. After his death, Martin recorded, in touching language, instances of his father's love, and the sweet intercourse he was permitted to have with him. But it is not surprising, if, at the period of childhood, so peculiarly in need of tender affection, the severity of the father was felt rather too much. He was once, as he tells us, so severely flogged by his father that he fled from him, and bore him a temporary grudge. Luther, in speaking of the discipline of children, has even quoted his mother as an example of the way in which parents, with the best intentions, are apt to go too far in punishing, and forget to pay due attention to the peculiarities of each child. His mother, he said, once whipped him till the blood came, for having taken a paltry little nut. He adds, that, in punishing children, the apple should be placed beside the rod, and they should not be chastised for an offence about nuts or cherries as if they had broken open a money-box. His parents, he acknowledged, had meant it for the very best, but they had kept him, nevertheless, so strictly that he had become shy and timid. Theirs, however, was not that unloving severity which blunts the spirit of a child, and leads to artfulness and deceit. Their strictness, well intended, and proceeding from a genuine moral earnestness of purpose, furthered in him a strictness and tenderness of conscience, which then and in after years made him deeply and keenly sensitive of every fault committed in the eyes of God; a sensitiveness, indeed, which, so far from relieving him of fear, made him apprehensive on account of sins that existed only in his imagination. It was a later consequence of this discipline, as Luther himself informs us, that he took refuge in a convent. He adds, at the same time, that it is better not to spare the rod with children even from the very cradle, than to let them grow up without any punishment at all; and that it is pure mercy to young folk to bend their wills, even though it costs labour and trouble, and leads to threats and blows.

We have a reference by Luther to the lessons he learned in childhood from his experience of poverty at home, in his remarks in later life, on the sons of poor men, who by sheer hard work raise themselves from obscurity, and have much to endure, and no time to strut and swagger, but must be humble and learn to be silent and to trust in God, and to whom God also has given good sound heads.

As to Luther's relations with his brothers and sisters we have the testimony of one who knew the household at Mansfeld, and particularly his brother James, that from childhood they were those of brotherly companionship, and that from his mother's own account he had exercised a governing influence both by word and deed on the good conduct of the younger members of the family.

His father must have taken him to school at a very early age. Long after, in fact only two years before his death, he noted down in the Bible of a 'good old friend,' Emler, a townsman of Mansfeld, his recollection how, more than once, Emler, as the elder, had carried him, still a weakly child, to and from school; a proof, not indeed, as a Catholic opponent of the next century imagined, that it was necessary to compel the boy to go to school, but that he was still of an age to benefit by being carried. The school-house, of which the lower portion still remains, stood at the upper end of the little town, part of which runs with steep streets up the hill. The children there were taught not only reading and writing, but also the rudiments of Latin, though doubtless in a very clumsy and mechanical fashion. From his experience of the teaching here, Luther speaks in later years of the vexations and torments with declining and conjugating and other tasks which school children in his youth had to undergo. The severity he there met with from his teacher was a very different thing from the strictness of his parents. Schoolmasters, he says, in those days were tyrants and executioners, the schools were prisons and hells, and in spite of blows, trembling, fear, and misery, nothing was ever taught. He had been whipped, he tells us, fifteen times one morning, without any fault of his own, having been called on to repeat what he had never been taught.

At this school he remained till he was fourteen, when his father resolved to send him to a better and higher-class place of education. He chose for that purpose Magdeburg; but what particular school he attended is not known. His friend Mathesius tells us that the town-school there was 'far renowned above many others.' Luther himself says that he went to school with the Null-brethren. These Null-brethren or Noll-brethren, as they were called, were a brotherhood of pious clergymen and laymen, who had combined together, but without taking any vows, to promote among themselves the salvation of their souls and the practice of a godly life, and to labour at the same time for the social and moral welfare of the people, by preaching the Word of God, by instruction, and by spiritual ministration. They undertook in particular the care of youth. They were, moreover, the chief originators of the great movement in Germany, at that time, for promoting intellectual culture, and reviving the treasures of ancient Roman and Greek literature. Since 1488 a colony of them had existed at Magdeburg, which had come from Hildesheim, one of their head-quarters. As there is no evidence of their having had a school of their own at Magdeburg, they may have devoted their services to the town-school. Thither, then, Hans Luther sent his eldest son in 1497. The idea had probably been suggested by Peter Reinicke, the overseer of the mines, who had a son there. With this son John, who afterwards rose to an important office in the mines at Mansfeld, Martin Luther contracted a lifelong friendship. Hans, however, only let his son remain one year at Magdeburg, and then sent him to school at Eisenach. Whether he was induced to make this change by finding his expectations of the school not sufficiently realised, or whether other reasons, possibly those regarding a cheaper maintenance of his son, may have determined him in the matter, there is no evidence to show. What strikes one here only is his zeal for the better education of his son.

Ratzeberger is the only one who tells us of an incident he heard of Luther from his own lips, during his stay at Magdeburg, and this was one which, as a physician, he relates with interest. Luther, it happened, was lying sick of a burning fever, and tormented with thirst, and in the heat of the fever they refused him drink. So one Friday, when the people of the house had gone to church, and left him alone, he, no longer able to endure the thirst, crawled off on hands and feet to the kitchen, where he drank off with great avidity a jug of cold water. He could reach his room again, but having done so he fell into a deep sleep, and on waking the fever had left him.

The maintenance his father was able to afford him was not sufficient to cover the expenses of his board and lodging as well as of his schooling, either at Magdeburg or afterwards at Eisenach. He was obliged to help himself after the manner of poor scholars, who, as he tells us, went about from door to door collecting small gifts or doles by singing hymns. 'I myself,' he says, 'was one of those young colts, particularly at Eisenach, my beloved town.' He would also ramble about the neighbourhood with his school-fellows; and often, from the pulpit or the lecturer's chair, would he tell little anecdotes about those days. The boys used to sing quartettes at Christmas-time in the villages, carols on the birth of the Holy Child at Bethlehem. Once, as they were singing before the door of a solitary farmhouse, the farmer came out and called to them roughly, 'Where are you, young rascals?' He had two large sausages in his hand for them, but they ran away terrified, till he shouted after them to come back and fetch the sausages. So intimidated, says Luther, had he become by the terrors of school discipline. His object, however, in relating this incident was to show his hearers how the heart of man too often construes manifestations of God's goodness and mercy into messages of fear, and how men should pray to God perseveringly, and without timidity or shamefacedness. In those days it was not rare to find even scholars of the better classes, such as the son of a magistrate at Mansfeld, and those who, for the sake of a better education, were sent to distant schools, seeking to add to their means in the manner we have mentioned.

After this, his father sent him to Eisenach, bearing in mind the numerous relatives who lived in the town and surrounding country, and who might be of service to him. But of these no mention has reached us, except of one, named Konrad, who was sacristan in the church of St. Nicholas. The others, no doubt, were not in a position to give him any material assistance.

About this time his singing brought him under the notice of one Frau Cotta, who with genuine affection took up the promising boy, and whose memory, in connection with the great Reformer, still lives in the hearts of the German people. Her husband, Konrad or Kunz, was one of the most influential citizens of the town, and sprang from a noble Italian family who had acquired wealth by commerce. Ursula Cotta, as her name was, belonged to the Eisenach family of Schalbe. She died in 1511. Mathesius tells us how the boy won her heart by his singing and his earnestness in prayer, and she welcomed him to her own table. Luther met with similar acts of kindness from a brother or other relative of hers, and also from an institution belonging to Franciscan friars at Eisenach, which was indebted to the Schalbe family for several rich endowments, and was named, in consequence, the Schalbe College. At Frau Cotta's, Luther was first introduced to the life in a patrician's house, and learned to move in that society.

At Eisenach he remained at school for four years. Many years afterwards we find him on terms of friendly and grateful intercourse with one Father Wiegand, who had been his schoolmaster there. Ratzeberger, speaking of the then schoolmaster at Eisenach, mentions a 'distinguished poet and man of learning, John Trebonius,' who, as he tells us, every morning, on entering the schoolroom, would take off his biretta, because God might have chosen many a one of the lads present to be a future mayor, or chancellor, or learned doctor; a thought which, as he adds, was amply realised afterwards in the person of Doctor Luther. The relations of these two at the school, which contained several classes, must be a matter of conjecture. But the system of teaching pursued there was praised afterwards by Luther himself to Melancthon. The former acquired there that thorough knowledge of Latin which was then the chief preparation for University study. He learned to write it, not only in prose, but also in verse, which leads us to suppose that the school at Eisenach took a part in the Humanistic movement already mentioned. Happily, his active mind and quick understanding had already begun to develop; not only did he make up for lost ground, but he even outstripped those of his own age.

As we see him growing up to manhood, the future hero of the faith, the teacher, and the warrior, the most important question for us is the course which his religious development took from childhood.

He who, in after years, waged such a tremendous warfare with the Church of his time, always gratefully acknowledged, and in his own teaching and conduct kept steadily in view, how, within herself, and underneath all the corruptions he denounced, she still preserved the groundwork of a Christian life, the charter of salvation, the fundamental truths of Christianity, and the means of redemption and blessing, vouchsafed by the grace of God. Especially did he acknowledge all that he had himself received from the Church since childhood. In that House, he says on one occasion, he was baptised, and catechised in the Christian truth, and for that reason he would always honour it as the House of his Father. The Church would at any rate take care that children, at home and at school, should learn by heart the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; that they should pray, and sing psalms and Christian hymns. Printed books, containing them, were already in existence. Among the old Christian hymns in the German language, of which a surprisingly rich collection has been formed, a certain number, at least, were in common use in the churches, especially for festivals. 'Fine songs' Luther called them, and he took care that they should live on in the Evangelical communities. Those old verses form in part the foundation of the hymns which we owe to his own poetical genius. Thus for Christmas we still have the carol of those times, *Ein Kindelein so löbelich*; and the first verse of Luther's Whitsun hymn, *Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist*, is taken, he tells us, from one of those old-fashioned melodies. Of the portions of Scripture read in church, the Gospels and Epistles were given in the mother-tongue. Sermons, also, had long been preached in German, and there were printed collections of them for the use of the clergy.

The places where Luther grew up were certainly better off in this respect than many others. For, in the main, very much was still wanting to realise what had been recommended and striven for by pious Churchmen, and writers and religious fraternities, or even enjoined by the Church herself. The Reformers had, indeed, a heavy and an irrefutable indictment to bring against the Catholic Church system of their time. The grossest ignorance and shortcomings were exposed by the Visitations which they undertook, and from these we may fairly judge of the actual state of things existing for many years before. It appeared, that even where these portions of the catechism were taught by parents and schoolmasters, they never formed the subject of clerical instruction to the young. It was precisely one of the charges brought against the enemies of the Reformation, that, notwithstanding the injunctions of their Church, they habitually neglected this instruction, and preferred teaching the children such things as carrying banners in processions and holy tapers. Priests were found, in the course of these visitations, who had scarcely any knowledge of the chief articles of the faith. His own personal experience of this neglect, when young, is not noticed by Luther in his later complaints on the subject.

But the main fault and failing which he recognised in after life, and which, as he tells us, was a source of inward suffering to him from childhood, was the distorted view, held up to him at school and from the pulpit, of the conditions of Christian salvation, and, consequently, of his own proper religious attitude and demeanour.

Luther himself, as we learn from him in later life, would have Christian children brought up in the happy assurance that God is a loving Father, Christ a faithful Saviour, and that it is their privilege and duty to approach their Father with frank and childlike confidence, and, if aroused to a consciousness of sin or wrong, to entreat at once His forgiveness. Such however, he tells us, was not what he was taught. On the contrary, he was instructed, and trained up from childhood in that narrowing conception of Christianity, and that outward form of religiousness, against which, more than anything, he bore witness as a Reformer.

God was pictured to him as a Being unapproachably sublime, and of awful holiness; Christ, the Saviour, Mediator, and Advocate, whose revelation can only bring judgment to those who reject salvation, as the threatening Judge, against whose wrath, as against that of God, man sought for intercession and mediation from the Virgin and the other saints. This latter worship, towards the close of the middle ages, had increased in importance and extent. Peculiar honour was paid to particular saints, in particular places, and for the furtherance of particular interests. The warlike St. George was the special saint of the town and county of Mansfeld: his effigy still surmounts the entrance to the old school-house. Among the miners the worship of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin, soon became popular towards the end of the century, and the mining town of Annaberg, built in 1496, was named after her. Luther records how the 'great stir' was first made about her, when he was a boy of fifteen, and how he was then anxious to place himself under her protection. There is no lack of religious writings of that time, which, with the view of preserving the Catholic faith, warn men earnestly against the danger of overvaluing the saints, and of placing their hopes more in them than in God; but we see from those very warnings how necessary they were, and later history shows us how little fruit they bore. As for Luther, certain beautiful features in the lives and legends of the saints exercised over him a power of attraction which he never afterwards renounced; and of the Virgin he always spoke with tender reverence, only regretting that men wished to make an idol of her. But of his early religious belief, he says that Christ appeared to him as seated on a rainbow, like a stern Judge; from Christ men turned to the saints, to be their patrons, and called on the Virgin to bare her breasts to her Son, and dispose him thereby to mercy. An example of what deceptions were sometimes practised in such worship came to the notice of the Elector John Frederick, the friend of Luther, and probably originated in a convent at Eisenach. It was a figure, carved in wood, of the Virgin with the infant Saviour in her arms, which was furnished with a secret contrivance by means of which the Child, when the people prayed to him, first turned away to His mother, and only when they had invoked her as intercessor, bowed towards them with His little arms outstretched.

On the other hand, the sinner who was troubled with cares about his soul and thoughts of Divine judgment, found himself directed to the performance of particular acts of penance and pious exercises, as the means to appease a righteous God. He received judgment and commands through the Church at the confessional. The Reformers themselves, and Luther especially, fully recognised the value of being able to pour out the inner temptations of the heart to some Christian father-confessor, or even to some other brother in the faith, and to obtain from his lips that comfort of forgiveness which God, in His love and mercy, bestows freely on the faithful. But nothing of this kind, they said, was to be found in the confessional. The conscience was tormented with the enumeration of single sins, and burdened with all sorts of penitential formalities; and it was just with a view that everyone should be drawn to this discipline of the Church, should use it regularly, and should seek for no other way to make his peace with God, that the educational activity of the Church, both with young and old, was especially directed.

Luther, in after life, as we have already remarked, always recognised and found comfort in the fact that, even under such conditions as the above, enough of the simple message of salvation in the Bible could penetrate the heart, and awaken a faith which, in spite of all artificial restraints and perplexing dogmas, should throw itself, with inward longing and childlike trust, into the arms of God's mercy, and so enjoy true forgiveness. He received, as we shall see, some salutary directions for so doing from later friends of his, who belonged to the Romish Church, nor was that character of ecclesiastical religiousness, so to speak, stamped everywhere, or to the same degree, on Christian life in Germany during his youth. Nevertheless, his whole inner being, from boyhood, was dominated by its influence; he, at all events, had never been taught to appreciate the Gospel as a child. Looking back in later years on his monastic days, and the whole of his previous life, he declared that he never could feel assured that his baptism in Christ was sufficient for his salvation, and that he was sorely troubled with doubt whether any piety of his own would be able to secure for him God's mercy. Thoughts of this kind he said induced him to become a monk.

Men have never been wanting, either before or since the time of Luther's youth, to denounce the abuses and corruptions of the Church, and particularly of the clergy. Language of this sort had long found its way to the popular ear, and had proceeded also from the people themselves. Complaints were made of the tyranny of the Papal hierarchy, and of their encroachments on social and civil life, as well as of the worldliness and gross immorality of the priests and monks. The Papacy had reached its lowest depth of moral degradation under Pope Alexander VI. We hear nothing, however, of the impressions produced on Luther, in this respect, in the circumstances of his early life. The news of such scandals as were then enacted at Rome, shamelessly and in open day, very likely took a long while to reach Luther and those about him. With regard to the carnal offences of the clergy, against which, to the honour of Germany be it said, the German conscience especially revolted, he made afterwards the noteworthy remark, that although during his boyhood the priests allowed themselves mistresses, they never incurred the suspicion of anything like unbridled sensuality or adulterous conduct. Examples of such kind date only from a later period.

The loyalty with which Mansfeld, his home, adhered to the ancient Church, is shown by several foundations of that time, all of which have reference to altars and the celebration of mass. The overseer of the mines, Reinicke, the friend of Luther's family, is among the founders: he left provision for keeping up services in honour of the Virgin and St. George.

A peculiarly reverential demeanour, in regard to religion and the Church, is observable in Luther's father, and one which was common no doubt among his honest, simple, pious fellow townsfolk. His conduct was consistently God-fearing. In his house it was afterwards told how he would often pray at the bedside of his little Martin,—how, as the friend of godliness and learning, he had enjoyed the friendship of priests and school-teachers. Words of pious reflection from his lips remained stamped on Luther's memory from his boyhood. Thus Luther tells us, in a sermon preached towards the close of his life, how he had often heard his dear father say, that, as his own parents had told him, the earth contains many more who require to be fed than there are sheaves, even if collected from all the fields in the world; and yet how wondrously does God know how to preserve mankind! In common with his fellow-townsmen, he followed the precepts and commands of his Church. When, in the year in which he sent his son to Magdeburg, two new altars in the church at Mansfeld were consecrated to a number of saints, and sixty days' indulgence was granted to anyone who heard mass at them, Hans Luther, with Reinicke and other fellow-magistrates, was among the first to make use of the invitation. The enemies of the Reformer, while fain to trace his origin to a heretic Bohemian, had not a shadow of a reason for suspecting his real father of any leanings to heresy. Nor do we hear a word in later years from the Reformer, after his father had separated with him from the Catholic Church, to show a trace of any hostile or critical remark against that Church, remembered from the lips of his father during childhood. Quietly but firmly the latter asserted his own judgment, and framed his will accordingly. He was firm, in particular, in the consciousness of his paternal rights and duties, even against the pretensions of the clergy. Thus, as his son Martin tells us, when he lay once on the point of death, and the priest admonished him to leave something to the clergy, he replied in the simplicity of his heart, 'I have many children: I will leave it them, for they want it more.' We shall see how unyieldingly, when his son entered a convent, he insisted, as against all the value and usefulness of monasticism, on the paramount obligation of God's command, that children should obey their parents. Luther also tells us how his father once praised in high terms the will left by a Count of Mansfeld, who without leaving any property to the Church, was content to depart from this world trusting solely to the bitter sufferings and death of Christ, and commending his soul to Him. Luther himself, when a young student, would have considered, as he tells us, a bequest to churches or convents a proper will to make. His father afterwards accepted his son's doctrine of salvation without hesitation, and with the full conviction that it was right. But remarks of his such as we have quoted, were consistent with a perfectly blameless demeanour in regard to the forms of conduct and belief as prescribed by the Church, with an avoidance of criticism and argument on ecclesiastical matters, which he knew were not his vocation, and above all with a complete abstention from such talk in the presence of his children. As to what concerns further the positive religious influence which he exercised over his children, any such impressions as he might have given by what he said of the Count of Mansfeld, were fully counterbalanced by the severity and firmness of his paternal discipline.

Concurrent with the doctrine of salvation through the intercession of the saints and the Church, and one's own good works, which Luther had been taught from his youth, were the dark popular ideas of the power of the devil—ideas, which, though not actually invented, were at least patronised by the Church, and which not only threaten the souls of men, but cast a baneful spell over all their natural life. Luther, as is well known, has frequently expressed his own opinions about the devil, in connection with the enchantments supposed to be practised by the Evil One on mankind, and, more especially, on the subject of witchcraft. Of one thing he was certain, that in God's hand we are safe from the Evil One, and can triumph over him. But even he believed the devil's work was manifested in sudden accidents and striking phenomena of Nature, in storms, conflagrations, and the like. As to the tales of sorcery and magic, which were told and believed in by the people, some he declared to be incredible, others he ascribed to the hallucinations effected by the devil. But that witches had power to do one bodily harm, that they plagued children in particular, and that their spells could affect the soul, he never seriously doubted.

chery in Luther's day

From his earliest childhood, and especially at home, ideas of that kind had been instilled into Luther, and accordingly they ministered strong food to his imagination. They had just then spread to a remarkable extent among the Germans, and had developed in remarkable ways. They had affected the administration of ecclesiastical and civil law, they had given rise to the Inquisition and the most barbarous cruelties in the punishment of those who were pretended to be in league with the devil, and they had gradually multiplied their baneful effects. The year after Luther's birth, appeared the remarkable Papal bull which sanctioned the trial of witches. When a boy, Luther heard a great deal about witches, though later in life he thought there was no longer so much talk about them, and he would not scruple to tell stories of how they harmed men and cattle, and brought down storms and hail. Nay, of his own mother he believed that she had suffered much from the witcheries of a female neighbour, who, as he said, 'plagued her children till they nearly screamed themselves to death.' Delusions such as these are certainly dark shadows in the picture of Luther's youth, and are important towards understanding his inner life as a man.

But while admitting the existence of these superstitious and pseudo-religious notions, we must not imagine that they composed the whole portraiture of Luther's early life. He was, as Mathesius describes him, a merry, jovial young fellow. In his later reflections on himself and his youthful days, the very war he was waging against the false teachings of the Church, from which he himself had suffered, made him dwell, as was natural, on this side of his early life. But amidst all those trials and depressing influences, the fresh and elastic vigour of his nature stood the strain—a vigour innate and inherited, and which afterwards shone forth in a new and brighter light, under a new aspect of religious life. His childlike joy in Nature around him, which afterwards distinguished so remarkably the theologian and champion of the faith, must be referred back to his original bent of mind and his life, when a boy, amid Nature's surroundings.

How much he lived, from childhood, with the peasantry, is shown by the natural ease with which he spoke in the popular dialect, even when he was learning Latin and enjoying a higher culture, and by the frequency with which the native roughnesses of that dialect broke out in his learned discourses or sermons. In no other theologian, nay, in no other known German writer of his century, do we meet with so many popular proverbs as in Luther, to whom they came naturally in his conversations and letters. German legends also, and popular tales, such as the history of Dietrich von Bern and other heroes, or of Eulenspiegel or Markolf, would hardly have been remembered so accurately by him in later years, if he had not familiarised himself with them in childhood. He would at times inveigh against the worthless, and even shameless tales and 'gossip,' as he called it, which such books contained, and especially against the priests who used to spice their sermons with such stories; but that he also recognised their value we know from his allusion to 'some people, who had written songs about Dietrich and other giants, and in so doing had expounded much greater subjects in a short and simple manner.' The pleasure with which he himself may have read or listened to them, can be gathered from his remark that 'when a story of Dietrich von Bern is told, one is bound to remember it afterwards, even though one has only heard it once.'

He maintained through life a faithful devotion to the places where he had grown up. Eisenach remained, as we have already seen, his beloved town. Mansfeld was particularly dear to him as his home, and the whole county as his 'fatherland;' he calls it with pride a 'noble and famous county.' The miners also, who were his fellow-countrymen and his dear father's work-mates, he loved all his life long. But a wider horizon was not opened to him among the people of the little town of Mansfeld, or where he afterwards went to school. To this fact, and to his quiet life as a monk, we must ascribe the peculiar feature of his later activity, namely, that while prosecuting with far-seeing eye and a warm heart the highest and most extensive tasks for his Church and for the German people in general, still, at the beginning of his work and campaign, he understood but little of the great world outside, and of politics, or even of the general state of Germany; nay, he shows at times a touchingly childlike simplicity in these matters.

The last few years of his school-life enabled him to make brave progress on the road to intellectual culture, which his father wished him to pursue. Thus equipped, he was prepared at the age of eighteen, to remove, in the summer of 1501 to the university at Erfurt.

CHAPTER III.

STUDENT-DAYS AT ERFURT AND ENTRY INTO THE CONVENT.

1501-1505.

Among the German universities, that of Erfurt, which could count already a hundred years of prosperous existence, occupied at this time a brilliant position. So high, Luther tells us, was its standing and reputation, that all its sister institutions were regarded as mere pigmies by its side. His parents could now afford to give him the necessary means for studying at such a place. 'My dear father,' he says, 'maintained me there with loyal affection, and by his labour and the sweat of his brow enabled me to go there.' He had now begun to feel a burning thirst for learning, and here, at the 'fountain of all knowledge,' to use Melancthon's words, he hoped to be able to quench it.

He began with a complete course of philosophy, as that science was then understood. It dealt, in the first place, with the laws and forms of thought and knowledge, with language, in which Latin formed the basis, or with grammar and rhetoric, as also with the highest problems and most abstruse questions of physics, and comprised even a general knowledge of natural science and astronomy. A complete study of all these subjects was not merely requisite for learned theologians, but frequently served as an introduction to that of law, and even of medicine.

When Luther first came from Eisenach to Erfurt, there was nothing yet about him that attracted the attention of others so far as to call forth any contemporary account of him. Enough, however, is known of the most eminent teachers there, at whose feet he sat~~e~~, and also of the general kind of intellectual food which they administered. He gained entrance into a circle of older and younger men than himself, teachers and fellow-students, who in later years, either as friends or opponents, were able to bear witness, favourably or the reverse, as to his life and work at Erfurt.

The leading professor of philosophy at Erfurt was then Jodocus Trutvetter, who, three years after Luther's arrival, became also doctor of theology and lecturer of the theological faculty. Next to him, in this department, ranked Bartholomew Arnoldi of Usingen. It was to these two men above others, and particularly to the former, that Luther looked for his instruction.

The philosophy which was then in vogue at Erfurt, and which found its most vigorous champion in Trutvetter, was that of the Scholasticism of later days. It is common to associate with the idea of Scholasticism, or the theological and philosophical School-science of the middle ages, a system of thought and instruction, embracing, indeed, the highest questions of knowledge and existence, but at the same time not venturing to strike into any independent paths, or to deviate an inch from tradition, but submitting rather, in everything connected, or supposed to be connected, with religious belief, to the dogmas and decrees of the Church and the authority of the early Fathers, and wasting the understanding and intellect in dry formalism or subtle but barren controversies. This conception fails to appreciate the vast labour of thought bestowed by leading minds on the attempt to unravel the mass of ecclesiastical teaching which had twined round the innermost lives of themselves and their fellow-Christians, and at the same time to follow those general questions under the guidance of the old philosophers, especially Aristotle, of whom they knew but little. But it is applicable, at any rate, to the Scholasticism of later days. The confidence with which its older exponents had thought to explain and establish orthodoxy by means of their favourite science, was gone; all the more, therefore, should that science keep silence in face of the commands of the Church. Men, moreover, had grown tired of the old questions of philosophy about the reality and real existence of Universals. It had been formerly a question of dispute whether our general ideas had a real existence, or whether they were nothing more than words or names, mere abstractions, comprehending the individual, which alone was supposed to possess Reality. At that time the latter doctrine, that of Nominalism, as it was called, prevailed. At length, these new or 'modern' philosophers abandoned the question of Realism, and the relation of thought to Reality, in favour of a system of pure logic or dialectics, dealing with the mere forms and expressions of thought, the formal analysis of ideas and words, the mutual relation of propositions and conclusions—in short, all that constitutes what we call formal logic, in its widest acceptation. At this point, the far-famed scholastic intellect, with its subtleties, its fine distinctions, its nice questions, its sophistical conclusions, reached its zenith.

To this logic Trutvetter also devoted himself, and in it he taught his pupils. He had just then published a series of treatises on the subject. To him this study was real earnest. Compared with others, he has shown in these excursions a cautious and discreet moderation, and no inclination for the quarrels and verbal combats often dear to logicians. The same can be said of his colleague Usingen. Trutvetter has shown also that he enjoyed and was widely read in earlier and modern, especially, of course, in Scholastic literature, including the works not only of the most important, but also of very obscure authors. We can imagine what delight he took in all this when in his professor's chair, and how much he expected from his pupils.

At Erfurt meanwhile, and by this same philosophical faculty, a fresh and vigorous impulse was being given to that study of classical antiquity, which gave birth to a new learning, and ushered in a new era of intellectual culture in Germany. We have already had occasion to refer to the movement and influence of Humanism at the schools which Luther attended at Magdeburg and Eisenach. He now found himself at one of the chief nurseries of these 'arts and letters' in Germany, nay, at the very place where their richest blossoms were unfolded. Erfurt could boast of having issued the first Greek book printed in Germany in Greek type, namely, a grammar, printed in Luther's first year at the University. It was the Greek and Latin poets, in particular, whose writings stirred the enthusiasm and emulation of the students. For refined expression and learned intercourse, the fluent and elegant Latin language was studied, as given in the works of classical writers. But far more important still was the free movement of thought, and the new world of ideas thus opened up.

In proportion as these young disciples of antiquity learned to despise the barbarous Latin and insipidity of the monkish and scholastic education of the day, they began to revolt against Scholasticism, against the dogmas of faith propounded by the Church, and even against the religious opinions of Christendom in general. History shows us the different paths taken, in this respect, by the Humanists; and we shall come across them, in another way, during the career of the Reformer, as having an important influence on the course of the Reformation. With many, an honest striving after religion and morality allied itself with the impulse for independent intellectual culture, and tried to utilise it for improving the condition of the Church. When the struggle of the Reformation began, some followed Luther and the other religious teachers on his side, some, shrinking back from his trenchant conclusions, and, above all, concerned for their own stock-in-trade of learning, counselled others to practise prudence and moderation, and themselves retired to the service of their muses. Others again, broke away altogether from the Christian faith and the principles of Christian morality. They took delight in a new life of Heathenism, devoted sometimes to sensual pleasures and gross immoralities, sometimes to the indulgence of refined tastes and the enjoyment of art. These latter never raised a weapon against the Church, but for the most part accommodated themselves to her forms. In her teachings, her ordinances, and her discipline, they saw something indispensable to the multitude, as whose conscious superiors they behaved. Indeed, they themselves wielded this government in the Church, and comfortably enjoyed their authority and its fruits. In Italy, at Rome, and on the Papal chair these despotic pretensions were then asserted without shame or reserve. In Germany, on the other hand, the leading champions of the new learning, even when in open arms against the barbarism of the monks and clergy, sought, for themselves and their disciples, to remain faithful on the ground of their Mother Church. At Erfurt, in particular, the relations between them and the representatives of Scholasticism were peaceful, unconstrained, and friendly. The dry writings of a Trutvetter they prefaced with panegyrics in Latin verse, and the Trutvetter would try to imitate their purer style.

Some talented young students of the classics at Erfurt formed themselves into a small *coterie* of their own. They enjoyed the cheerful pleasures of youthful society, nor were poetry and wine wanting, but the rules of decorum and good manners were not overlooked. Several men, whom we shall come across afterwards in the history of Luther, belonged to this circle;—for instance, John Jäger, known as Crotus Rubianus, the friend of Ulrich Hutten, and George Spalatin (properly Burkhard), the trusted fellow-labourer of the Reformer. Both had already been three years at the university when Luther entered it. Three years after his arrival, came Eoban Hess, the most brilliant, talented, and amiable of the young Humanists and poets of Germany.

Such was the learned company to which Luther was introduced in the philosophical faculty at Erfurt. So far, different avenues of intellectual culture were opened to him. He threw himself into the study of that philosophy in all its bearings, and, not content with exploring the tangled and thorny paths of logic, took counsel how to enjoy, as far as possible, the fruits of the newly-revived knowledge of antiquity.

As regards the latter, he carried the study of Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero, in particular, farther than was customary with the professed students of Humanism, and the same with the poetical works of more modern Latin writers. But his chief aim was not so much to master the mere language of the classical authors, or to mould himself according to their form, as to cull from their pages rich apophthegms of human wisdom, and pictures of human life and of the history of peoples. He learned to express pregnant and powerful thoughts clearly and vigorously in learned Latin, but he was himself well aware how much his language was wanting in the elegance, refinement, and charm of the new school; indeed, this elegance he never attempted to attain.

With the members of this circle of young Humanists, Luther was on terms of personal friendship. Crotus was able to remind him in after life how, in close intimacy, they had studied the fine arts together at the university. But there is no mention of him in the numerous letters and poems left to posterity by the aspiring Humanists at Erfurt. He had made himself, Crotus adds, a name among his companions as the 'learned philosopher' and the 'musician,' but he never belonged to the 'poets,' which was the favourite title of the young Humanists. Many, including even Melancthon, have lamented that he was not more deeply imbued with the spirit of those 'noble arts and letters,' which educate the mind, and would have tended to soften his rugged nature and manner. But they would have been of little value to him for the quick decision and energy required for the war he had afterwards to wage. Those intellectual treasures and enjoyments kept aloof not only from such contests, but also from sharp and searching investigations of the highest questions of religion and morality, and from the inward struggle, so often painful, which they bring. As regards the merits of Humanism, which Luther again, as a Reformer, eagerly acknowledged, we must not forget how selfishly it withdrew itself from contact and communion with German popular life, nor how it helped to create an exclusive aristocracy of intellect, and allowed the noblest talents to become as clumsy in their own natural mother-tongue, as they were clever in the handling of foreign, acquired forms of art. Luther, in not yielding further to those influences, remained a German.

Philosophy, then, engrossed him, and allowed him but little time for other things. And in studying this, he sought to grapple with the highest problems of the human understanding. These problems occupied also the labours of the later Scholastics, however faulty were the forms in which they clothed their ideas. At the same time, these very forms attracted him, from the scope they gave to the exercise of his natural acuteness and understanding. Disputation was his great delight; and argumentative contests were then in fashion at the universities. But in after years, as soon as the contents of the Bible were opened to his inner understanding, and he recognised in its pages the object of real theological knowledge, he regretted the time and labour which he had wasted on those studies, and even spoke of them with disgust.

Crotus has already told us of the sociable life that Luther led with his friends. The love for music, which he had shown in school-days, he continued to keep up, and indulged in it merrily with his fellow-students. He had a high-pitched voice, not strong, but audible at a distance. Besides singing, he learned also to play the lute, and this without a master, and he employed his time in this way when laid up once by an accident to his leg.

Such rapid progress did he make in his philosophical studies, that in his third term he was able to attain his baccalaureate, the first academical degree of the theological faculty. This degree, according to the general custom of the universities, preceded that of Master, corresponding to the present Doctor, of philosophy. The examination for it, which Luther passed on Michaelmas day 1502, professed to include the most important subjects in the province of philosophy. But it could not have been very severe. The chief work came when he took his next degree as Master, which was at the beginning of 1505. He then experienced what afterwards, speaking of Erfurt's former glory, he thus describes: 'What a moment of majesty and splendour was that, when one took the degree of Master, and torches were carried before, and honour was paid one. I consider that no temporal or worldly joy can equal it.' Melancthon tells us, on the authority of several of Luther's fellow-students, that his talent was then the wonder of the whole university.

In accordance with the wish of his father and the advice of his relations, he was now to fit himself for a lawyer. In this profession, they thought, he would be able to turn his talents to the best account, and make a name in the world. And in this department also, the university of Erfurt could boast of one of the most distinguished men of learning of that time, Henning Goede, who was now in the prime of his vigour. Luther, accordingly, began to attend the lectures on law, and his father allowed him to buy some valuable books for that purpose, particularly a 'Corpus Juris.'

Meanwhile, however, in his inner religious life a change was being prepared, which proved the turning-point of his career.

Luther himself, as we have seen, frequently pointed out in after life the influences which, even from childhood, under the discipline of home, the experiences of school, and the teaching of the Church, combined to bring about this result. He could never shake off for any length of time, even when in the midst of learned study or the enjoyment of student life, the consciousness that he must be pious and satisfy all the strict commands of God, that he must make good all the shortcomings of his life, and reconcile himself with Heaven, and that an angry Judge was throned above who threatened him with damnation. Inner voices of this kind, in a man of sensitive and tender conscience, were bound to assert themselves the more loudly and earnestly, as, in his progress from youth to manhood, he realised more fully his personal responsibility to God, and also his personal independence. To religious observances, in which he had been trained from childhood, Luther, as a student, remained faithful. Regularly he began his day with prayer, and as regularly attended mass. But of any new or comforting means of access to God and salvation, he heard nothing, even here. In the town of Erfurt there was an earnest and powerful preacher, named Sebastian Weinmann, who denounced in incisive language the prevalent vices of the day, and exposed the corruption of ecclesiastical life, and whom the students thronged to hear. But even he had nothing to offer to satisfy Luther's inward cravings of the soul. It was an episode in his life when he once found a Latin Bible in the library of the university. Though then nearly twenty years of age, he had never yet seen a Bible. Now for the first time he saw how much more it contained than was ever read out and explained in the churches. With delight he perused the story of Samuel and his mother, on the first pages that met his eye; though, as yet, he could make nothing more out of the Sacred Book. It was not on account of any particular offences, such as youthful excesses, that Luther feared the wrath of God. Staunch Catholics at Erfurt, including even later avowed enemies of the Reformer, who knew him there as a student, have never hinted at anything of that sort against him. 'The more we wash our hands, the fouler they become,' was a favourite saying of Luther's. He referred, no doubt, to the numerous faults in thought, word, and deed, which, in spite of human carefulness, every day brings, and which, however insignificant they might seem to others, his conscience told him were sins against God's holy law. Disquieting questions, moreover, now arose in his mind, so sorely troubled with temptation; and his subtle and penetrating intellect, so far from being able to solve them, only plunged him deeper in distress. Was it then really God's own will, he asked himself, that he should become actually purged from sin and thereby be saved? Was not the way to hell or the way to heaven already fixed for him immutably in God's will and decree, by which everything is determined and preordained? And did not the very futility of his own endeavours hitherto prove that it was the former fate that hung over him? He was in danger of going utterly astray in his conception of such a God. Expressions in the Bible such as those which speak of serving Him with fear became to him intolerable and hateful. He was seized at times with fits of despair such as might have tempted him to blaspheme God. It was this that he afterwards referred to as the greatest temptation he had experienced when young.

His physical condition probably contributed to this gloomy frame of mind. Already during his baccalaureate we hear of an illness of his, which awakened in him thoughts of death. A friend, represented by later tradition as an aged priest, said to him on his sick bed, 'Take courage; God will yet make you the means of comfort to many others;' and these words impressed him strongly even then. An accident also, which threatened to be fatal, must have tended to alarm him. As he was travelling home at Easter, and was within an hour's distance of Erfurt, he accidentally injured the main artery of his leg with the rapier which, like other students, he carried at his side. Whilst a friend who was with him had gone for a doctor, and he was left alone, he pressed the wound tightly as he lay on his back, but the leg continued to swell. In the anguish of death he called upon the Virgin to help him. That night his terror was renewed when the wound broke open afresh, and again he invoked the Mother of God. It was during his convalescence after this accident that he resolved upon learning to play the lute.

He was terribly distressed also, a few months after he had taken his degree as Master, by the sudden death of one of his friends, not further known to us, who was either assassinated or snatched away by some other fatality.

Well might the thought even then have occurred to him, while so disturbed in his mind and overpowered by feelings of sadness, whether it would not be better to seek his cure in the monastic holiness recommended by the Church, and to renounce altogether the world and all the success he had hitherto aspired to. The young Master of Arts, as he tells us himself in later years, was indeed a sorrowful man.

Suddenly and offhand he was hurried into a most momentous decision. Towards the end of June 1505, when several Church festivals fall together, he paid a visit to his home at Mansfeld, in quest, very possibly, of rest and comfort to his mind. Returning on July 2, the feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, he was already near Erfurt, when, at the village of Stotternheim a terrific storm broke over his head. A fearful flash of lightning darted from heaven before his eyes. Trembling with fear, he fell to the earth, and exclaimed, 'Help, Anna, beloved Saint! I will be a monk.' A few days after, when quietly settled again at Erfurt, he repented having used these words. But he felt that he had taken a vow, and that, on the strength of that vow, he had obtained a hearing. The time, he knew, was past for doubt or indecision. Nor did he think it necessary to get his father's consent; his own conviction and the teaching of the Church told him that no objection on the part of his father could release him from his vow. Thus he severed himself at once from his former life and companions. On July 16 he called his best friends together to bid them leave. Once more they tried to keep him back; he answered them, 'To-day you see me, and never again.' The next day, that of St. Alexius, they accompanied him with tears to the gates of the Augustinian convent in the town, which he thought was to receive him for ever.

It is chiefly from what Luther himself has told us that we are enabled to picture to ourselves this remarkable occurrence. Rumour, and rumour only, has given the name of Alexius to that unknown friend whose death so terrified him, and has represented this friend as having been struck dead by lightning at his side.

The Luther of later days declared that his monastic vow was a compulsory one, forced from him by terror and the fear of death. But, at the same time, he never doubted that it was God who urged him. Thus he said afterwards, 'I never thought to leave again the convent. I was entirely dead to the world, until God thought that the time had come.'

PART II.

LUTHER AS MONK AND PROFESSOR, UNTIL HIS ENTRY ON THE WAR OF REFORMATION—1505-1517.

CHAPTER I.

AT THE CONVENT AT ERFURT, TILL 1508.

LUTHER'S resolve to follow a monastic life was arrived at suddenly, as we have seen. But he weighed that resolve well in his mind, and just as carefully considered the choice of the convent which he entered.

The Augustinian monks, whose society he announced his intention to join, belonged at that time to the most important monastic order in Germany. So much had already been said with justice, in the way of complaint and ridicule, of the depravation of monastic life, its idleness, hypocrisy, and gross immorality, that many of them fancied that the solemn renunciation of marriage and the world's goods, and the absolute submission of their wills to the commands of their superiors and the regulations of their Order, constituted true service to God, and raised them to a peculiar position of holiness and merit. Outward discipline, at all events, was universally insisted on. Among the German institutions of this Order, whilst neglect and depravity had crept in elsewhere, a large number had, for some time past, distinguished themselves by a strict adherence to their old statutes, originating, it was supposed, from their founder St. Augustine, but relating, at the best, to mere matters of form. These institutions formed themselves into an association, presided over by a Vicar of the Order, as he was called, a Vicar-General for Germany. To this association belonged the convent at Erfurt. Its inmates were treated with marked favour and respect by the higher and educated classes in the town. They were said to be active in preaching and in the care of souls, and to cultivate among themselves the study of theology. Arnoldi, Luther's teacher, belonged to this convent. As the Order possessed no property, but all its members lived on alms, the monks went about the town and country to collect gifts of money, bread, cheese, and other victuals.

According to the rules of the Order, applications for admission were not granted at once, but time was taken to see whether the applicant was in earnest. After that he was received as a novice for at least a year of probation. Until that year expired he was at liberty to reconsider his wish.

Luther, before taking this final step, thought of his parents, with a view to lay before them his resolve. The monastic brethren, however, endeavoured to dissuade him, by reminding him how one must leave father and mother for Christ and His Cross, and how no one who has put his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Upon his writing to his father on the subject, the latter, strong in the conviction of his paternal rights, flew into a passion with his son. 'My father,' says Luther later, 'was near going mad about it; he was ill satisfied, and would not allow it. He sent me an answer in writing, addressing me in terms that showed his displeasure, and renouncing all further affection.' Soon after he lost two of his sons by the plague. This epidemic had likewise broken out so violently at Erfurt, that about harvest-time whole crowds of students fled with their teachers from the town, and Luther's father received news that his son Martin had also fallen a victim. His friends then urged him that, if the report proved false, he ought at least to devote his dearest to God, by letting this son who still remained to him, enter the blessed Order of God's servants. At last the father let himself be talked over; but he yielded, as Luther informs us, with a sad and reluctant heart.

The young novice was welcomed among his brethren with hymns of joy, and prayers, and other ceremonies. He was soon clothed in the garb of his Order. Over a white woollen shirt he was made to wear a frock and cowl of black cloth, with a black leathern girdle. Whenever he put these on or off a Latin prayer was repeated to him aloud, that the Lord might put off the old and put on the new man, fashioned according to God. Above the cowl he received a scapulary, as it was called—in other words, a narrow strip of cloth hanging over shoulders, breast, and back, and reaching down to his feet. This was meant to signify that he took upon him the yoke of Him who said, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' At the same time, he was handed over to a superior, appointed to take charge of the novices, to introduce them to the practices of monastic devotion, to superintend their conduct, and to watch over their souls.

Above all, it was held important that the monks should be taught to subdue their own wills. They had to learn to endure, without opposition, whatever was imposed upon them, and that, indeed, all the more cheerfully, the more distasteful it appeared. Any tendency to pride was overcome by enjoining immediately the most menial offices on the offender. Friends of Luther tell us how, during his first period of probation in particular, he had to perform the meanest daily labour with brush and broom, and how his jealous brethren took particular pleasure in seeing the proud young graduate of yesterday trudge through the streets, with his beggar's wallet on his back, by the side of another monk more accustomed to the work. At first, we are told, the university interceded on his behalf as a member of their own body, and obtained for him at least some relaxation from his menial duties. From Luther's own lips, in after life, we hear not a word of complaint about any special vexations and burdens. As far as was possible, he did not allow them to daunt him ; nay, he longed for even severer exercises, to enable him to win the favour of God. Even as a Reformer he remembered with gratitude the 'Pedagogue,' or superintendent of his noviciate ; he was a fine old man, he tells us, a true Christian under that execrable cowl.

The novice found each day, as it went by, fully occupied with the repetition of set prayers and the performance of other acts of devotion. For the day and night together there were seven or eight appointed hours of prayer, or *Horæ*. During each of these the brethren who were not yet priests had to say twenty-five Paternosters with the Ave Maria, more ample formulas of prayer being prescribed meanwhile to the priests. Luther was also introduced already then to certain theological studies, which were under the supervision of two learned fathers of the monastery. But what was of the most importance for him was that a Bible—the Latin translation then in general use in the Church—was put into his hands. Just about this time, a new code of statutes had come in force for these Augustinian convents, drawn up by Staupitz, the Vicar of the Order, which enjoined, as matters of duty, assiduous reading, devout attention to the Hours, and a zealous study of Holy Writ. Teachers were wanting to Luther, and he found it very difficult to understand all he read. But with genuine appetite he read himself, so to speak, into his Bible, and clung to it ever afterwards.

Bible -
Vulgate in
monaster

At the end of his year of probation followed his solemn admission to the Order. Faithfully 'unto death' did Luther then promise to live according to the rules of the holy father Augustine, and to render obedience to Almighty God, to the Virgin Mary, and to the prior of the monastery. Before doing so, he put on anew the dress of his Order, which had been consecrated with holy water and incense.

Vow

The prior received his vows and sprinkled holy water upon him as he prostrated himself upon the ground in the form of a cross. When the ceremony was over, his brethren congratulated him on being now like an innocent child fresh from the baptism. He was then given a cell of his own, with table, bedstead, and chair. It looked out upon the cloistered yard of the monastery. It was destroyed by a fire on March 7, 1872.

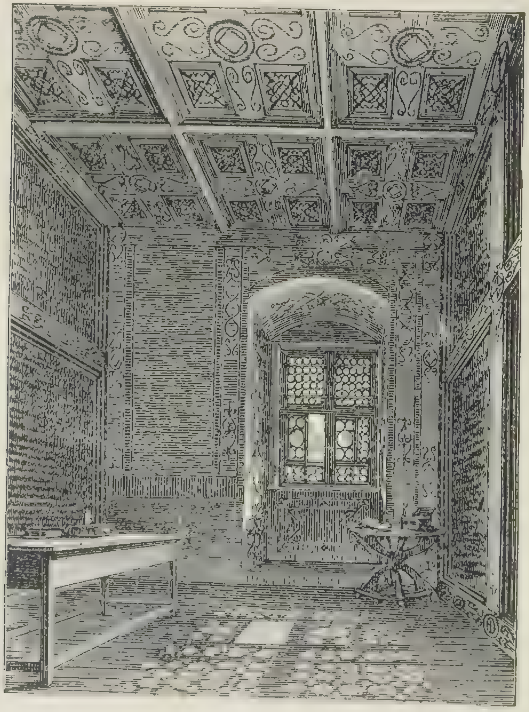


FIG. 4.—LUTHER'S CELL AT ERFURT.

Luther now, by an inviolable promise, had bound himself to that vocation through which he aspired to gain heaven. The means whereby he hoped to realise his aspiration were abundantly provided for him in his new home. If he sought the favour of the Virgin and of other saints who should intercede for him before the judgment-seat of God and Christ, he found at once in his Order a fervent worship of the Virgin in particular, and all possible directions for her service. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which Pius IX., in our own days, first ventured to raise into a dogma of the Church, was zealously defended by the Augustinians, and firmly maintained by Luther himself, even after the beginning of his war of Reformation. John Palz, one of his two theological teachers in the convent, wrote profusely in honour of this doctrine, and described all Christians as its spiritual children. Under its mantle, says Luther, he had to creep into the presence of Christ. From the multitude of other saints Luther selected a number as his constant helpers in need. We notice particularly that among these, in addition to St. Anne and St. George, was the Apostle Thomas; from him who himself had once betrayed such cowardice and want of faith he might well hope for peculiar sympathy. We have already mentioned the set prayers which filled up a great portion of the day. He was required above all things to learn and repeat them accurately, word by word. Afterwards, as he tells us, the *Horæ* were read aloud after the manner of magpies, jackdaws, or parrots.

Hispanist

If he wished in penitence to be freed from the sins which had tormented him so long, and were a daily burden on his conscience, the means of confession provided by the Church were always ready for him in the convent. Once a week, at the least, every brother had to attend the private confessional. All his sins, without exception, had then to be revealed, if he wished to obtain for them forgiveness. Luther endeavoured to unbosom to his father-confessor all he had done from his youth up: but this was too much even for the priest. It was by means of a complete inward contrition, corresponding to the infinite burden of sin, that the person confessing was to make himself worthy of the forgiveness which the priest then testified to him by absolution. According to the prevailing doctrine, however, what was wanting to the penitent in completeness of contrition, was supplied by the Sacrament of Absolution. But the punishments reserved by God for sinners were not supposed to be ended by this absolution or forgiveness; these had to be atoned for by peculiar observances, imposed by the priest, and by prayer, alms, fasting, and other acts of mortification. For him who was not forgiven, remained hell; for him who had not expiated his sins, at least the fear and pains of purgatory. Such was and still is the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Thus Luther was now summoned and directed to pursue methodically the painful work of self-examination, which had oppressed him even before he entered the convent, and to use all the means of grace here offered to him. But the more he searched into his life and thoughts, the more transgressions of God's will he found, and the more grievously did they afflict his conscience. It was not, indeed, as might have been imagined with a strong young man like himself, a question of any sensual appetites, stimulated all the more by the restraints of the convent. It was with the passions of anger, hatred, and envy against his brethren and fellow-creatures, that he had to reproach himself. Those who disliked him accused him in particular of self-conceit, and of letting his temper break out too easily. Faults of that description, in thought, word, or deed, were to his own conscience as deadly sins, though to the priest who listened to him at confession, they seemed too trifling to call for enumeration. To these were added a number of smaller offences against the ordinances of the Church and the convent, with reference to outward observances and forms of worship, prayers, and so on, all of which, insignificant as they must seem to us, the Church was accustomed to treat as grievous sins. Finally, there arose in his mind a constant restlessness, which made him look for sins where none in reality existed. What he had said once before about washing one's hands, that it only made them become fouler, he had now to experience for himself. His contrition made him feel pain and fear in abundance, but not so as to enable him to say to himself that it purged the evil in the sight of God. Absolution was pronounced over him again and again, but who ever gave him any assurance that he had fulfilled its conditions, and therefore could really confide in its efficacy? As for acts of penance, he willingly performed them, and, indeed, did far more in the way of prayer, fasting, and vigil than either the rules of the convent demanded or his father-confessor enjoined. His body, from his hardy training as a child, was well prepared for such austerities, but in spite of that, he had for a long while to suffer from their results. Luther, in later years, could well bear witness of himself that he had caused his own body far more pain and torture with those practices of penance than all his enemies and persecutors had caused to theirs.

What leisure remained, after his other monastic duties were over, he devoted most industriously to the study of theology. He read, in particular, the writings of the later Scholastic theologians, with whom he had partly occupied himself during his philosophical course. Of some of these, such as the Englishman Occam, in particular, whose acuteness of reasoning he especially admired, there were writings which, in reference to questions of external Church polity, might have led him even then into paths of his own, if his mind had been disposed for it. These writings were directed against the absolute power of the Pope in the Church, and against his aggressions in the territory of Empire and State. But any such aim was very far removed from the monastic Order to which Luther had devoted himself, and from the theologians who were here his teachers. Palz, whom we have mentioned already, had especially distinguished himself by his glorification of the Papal indulgences. Moreover, the whole Order, and the German convents belonging to it in particular, were indebted to the Pope for various acts of favour. Nor was Luther himself less careful to hold firmly to the ordinances of the hierarchy, than to avail himself of the means of salvation offered by the Church.

theology X

What at all times in his theological studies enlisted his warmest personal interest was the difficult question, how sinners could obtain everlasting salvation. And all that he came to read on that subject in the writings of those theologians, and to hear from his learned teachers in the convent, served only to increase his fruitless inward wrestlings, and his anxiety and sense of need. The great father of the Church, from whom his Order was named, and to whom their rules were ascribed, had once, on the ground of his own experiences of the struggle with sin and the flesh, laid down with great force, and in a triumphant controversy with his opponents, the doctrine that, as the Apostle says, salvation depends not on the conduct of man, but on the grace of God, not on the will of man, but on the willingness of God to pardon, Who alone transforms the sinner, and grants him the power and the will for good. But any knowledge or understanding of this theology of Augustine was as strange to his own Order as to the Scholastics. It was taught, indeed, that heaven was too high for man to attain to otherwise than by the grace of God. But it was also taught that the sinner, by his own natural strength, both could and ought to do enough in God's sight to earn that grace which would then help him further on the way to heaven. He who had thus obtained that grace, it was said, felt himself enabled and impelled to do even more than God's commands require. Reference to the bitter passion and death of the Saviour was not omitted, it is true, by the theologians with whom Luther had to do, and frequently, as, for example, by his teacher Palz, was impressed on Christian hearts in words full of

Works

Xt's work

feeling. But the chief stress was laid, not on the redeeming love on which man could rest his confident assurance, but on the necessity of offering oneself to Him who had offered Himself for man, and of submitting even to the pains of death, in imitation of Him, and to pay the penalty of sin. In this way, again and again, Luther saw before him claims on the part of God which he could never hope to satisfy. His sorest trial was caused by the thought that God Himself should have the will to let him fail after all his fruitless efforts, and finally be numbered with the lost. And it was just with the later Scholastics that he found, not indeed a theory according to which God had simply predestined a part of mankind to perdition, but a general conception of God which would represent Him as a Being not so much of holy love, as of arbitrary, absolute will.

Luther spent two years in the convent amidst these strivings and inward sufferings. His spiritual life, as it was called, of strict discipline and asceticism was quoted in other convents as a model for imitation. Now and then, indeed, he felt himself puffed up with a sense of superior sanctity—'a proud saint,' as he afterwards called himself. But humility was the ruling temper of his mind. Frequently, in after life, he described his condition as a warning to others. Thus he speaks of the disciples of the law, who try by their own works, by constant labour, by wearing shirts of hair, by self-scourging, by fasting, by every means, in short, to satisfy the law. Such a one, he tells us, he himself had been. But he had also learned by experience, he adds, what happens when a man is tempted, and death or danger frightens him; how he despairs, nay, would fly from God as from the devil, and would rather that there were no God at all. So great became his inward sufferings, that he thought both body and soul must succumb. Thus he tells us later on, when speaking of the torments of purgatory, of a man, who doubtless was himself, how he had often endured such agony, only momentary it is true, but so hellish in its violence, that no tongue could express nor pen describe it; that, had it lasted longer, even for half an hour, or only five minutes, he must have died then and there, and his bones have been consumed to ashes. He himself saw afterwards in these pains, visitations of a special kind, such as God does not send to everyone. But they served him then as a proof, and one of universal application, that that school of the law, as he called it, would bring no real holiness either to others or himself, but must teach a man to despair of himself and of any claims or merits of his own. And, indeed, as we know from all that had gone before, it was not simply the external barrenness of the regulations of Church and convent, or a sense of imperfect fulfilment on his part, that caused his restlessness of conscience; what gave him the deepest anxiety and harassed him the most were those very inward stirrings, which revealed to him his opposition to God's eternal demands, the fulfilment of which he thought indispensable for reconciliation to God.

Teaches despair

His experiences at the convent led him to the perception of those principles which formed the groundwork of his preaching as a Reformer. From his exemplary conduct there, and his wonderful and active conversion, he was compared to St. Paul. In quite another sense he resembled the great Apostle. The latter, when a Pharisee, had laboured to justify himself before God by the law and the prophets. 'O wretched man that I am,' Luther there must have exclaimed of himself, and afterwards, looking back on his experiences, have counted all as 'dung and loss,' in order to be justified rather by faith through the grace of God and the Saviour, and to become free and holy.

Saint Paul

Just as, meanwhile, inside the Catholic Church, the laws, dogmas, and School theories relating to the means of salvation, were never able to supplant entirely the thought of the simple testimony of the Bible, and of the Church's own confession of God's forgiving love and His redeeming and absolving grace, or to prevent simple, pious Christians from seeking here a refuge in the inmost depths of their hearts, so now, at this very convent of Erfurt, where Luther's inward development in those theories and dogmas had reached so high a pitch, he received also the first serious impressions in the other direction. They found with him a difficult and gradual entrance, from the energy and consistency with which he had taken up his original standpoint. But with all the more energy, and with perfect consistency, did he abandon that standpoint, when new light dawned upon him from his new conception of the truth.

Luther's teacher at the convent, by whom we shall have to understand the superintendent of the novices, had already made a deep impression upon him, by reminding him of the words of the Apostles' Creed about the forgiveness of sins, and representing to him, what Luther had never ventured to apply to himself, that the Lord himself had commanded us to hope. For this he referred him to a passage in the writings of St. Bernard, where that fervent preacher, imbued though he was in his theology with the Church notions of the middle ages, insists on the importance of this very faith in God's forgiveness, and appeals to the words of St. Paul that man is justified by grace through faith. Remarks of this kind sank into Luther's mind, and took root there, though their fruit only ripened by degrees. Of his teacher Arnoldi, also, he spoke with admiration and gratitude, for the comfort he had known how to impart to him. Arnoldi

But the one who at this time acquired by far the most potent, wholesome, and lasting influence upon Luther, was the Vicar-General, John von Staupitz. He was a remarkable man, of a noble and pious disposition, and a refined and far-seeing mind. A master of the forms of Scholastic theology, he was also deeply read in Scripture; he made its teachings the special standard of his life, and was Staupitz careful to enjoin others to do the same. He strove after an inward, practical life in God, not confined to mere forms and observances. Sharp conflicts and controversies were not to his taste; but mildly and discreetly he sought to plant, in his own field of work, and to leave what he had planted in God's name to grow up.

It was during his visits to Erfurt that Staupitz came in contact with the gifted, thoughtful, and melancholy young monk. He treated Luther, both in conversation and letter, with fatherly confidence, and Luther unlocked to him, as to a father, his heart and its cares. Upon his wishing to confess to him all his many small sins, Staupitz insisted first on distinguishing between what were really sins, and what were not; as for self-imagined sins, or such a patchwork of offences as Luther laid before him, he would not listen to them; that was not the kind of seriousness, he would say, that God wished to have. Luther tormented himself with a system of penance, consisting of actual pain, punishments, and expiations.

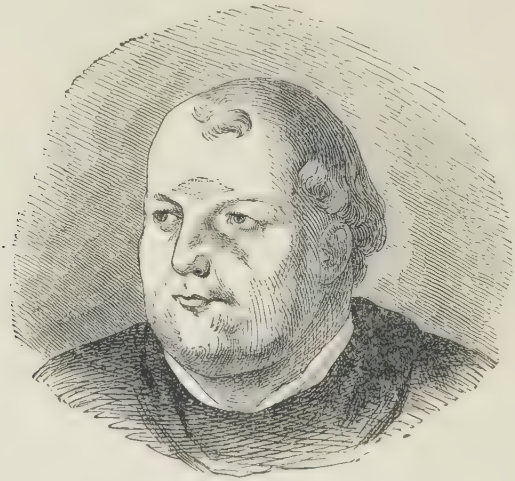


FIG. 5.—STAUPITZ.
(From the Portrait in St. Peter's Convent at Salzburg.)

Staupitz taught him that repentance, in the Scriptural meaning, was an inward change and conversion, which must proceed from the love of holiness and of God; and that, for peace with God, he must not look to his own good resolutions to lead a better life, which he had not the strength to carry out, or to his own acts, which could never satisfy the law of God, but must trust with patience to God's forgiving mercy, and learn to see in Christ, whom God permitted to suffer for the sins of man, not the threatening Judge, but rather the loving Saviour. To Christ above all he referred him, when Luther pondered on the secret eternal will of God, and was near despair. God's eternal purpose, he would say, shines clearly in the wounds of Christ. Did his temptations not cease, he bade him see in them means to draw him to the love of God. The thoughts of Staupitz turned in this on the temptations to pride, which might themselves be the means of curing that pride, and on the great things for which God wished to prepare him. In a simple, practical manner, and from the experiences of his own life, he would thus counsel and converse with Luther. During the long course of a confidential intercourse with his friend, his own theology in later years became visibly developed, and his pupil of earlier days became afterwards his teacher. But Luther, both then and throughout his life, spoke of him with grateful affection as his spiritual father, and thanked God that he had been helped out of his temptations by Dr. Staupitz, without whom he would have been swallowed up in them and perished.

Bible

The first firm ground, however, for his convictions and his inner life, and the foundation for all his later teachings and works, was found by Luther in his own persevering study of Holy Writ. In this also he was encouraged by Staupitz, who must, however, have been amazed at his indefatigable industry and zeal. For the interpretation of the Bible the means at his command were meagre in the extreme. He himself explored in all cases to their very centre the truths of Christian salvation and the highest questions of moral and religious life. A single passage of importance would occupy his thoughts for days. Significant words, which he was not able yet to comprehend, remained fixed in his mind, and he carried them silently about with him. Thus it was, for example, as he tells us, with the text in Ezekiel, 'I will not the death of a sinner,' a passage which engrossed his earnest thoughts.

year in monastery

It was the third and last year of his monastic life at Erfurt that brought with it, as far as we see, the decisive turn for his inward struggles and labours.

Priest

In his second year, on May 2, 1507, he received, by command of his superiors, his solemn ordination as a priest. It was then for the first time since his entry into the convent against his father's will, that the latter saw him again. A convenient day was expressly arranged for him, to enable him to take part personally at the solemnity. He rode into Erfurt with a stately train of friends and relations. But in his opinion of the step taken by his son he remained unalterably firm. At the entertainment which was given in the convent to the young priest, the latter tried to extort from him a friendly remark upon the subject, by asking him why he seemed so angry, when monastic life was such a high and holy thing. His father replied in the presence of all the company, 'Learned brothers, have you not read in Holy Writ, that a man must honour father and mother?' And on being reminded how his son had been called, nay, compelled to this new life by heaven, 'Would to God,' he answered, 'it were no spirit of the devil!' He let them understand that he was there, eating and drinking, as a matter of duty, but that he would much rather be away.

To Luther, however, the post of high dignity to which he was now promoted brought new fear and anxiety. He had now to appear before God as a priest; to have Christ's

Body, the very Christ Himself, and God actually present before him at the mass on the altar; to offer the Body of Christ as a sacrifice to the living and eternal God. Added to this, there were a multitude of forms to observe, any oversight wherein was a sin. All this so overpowered him at his first mass, that he could scarcely remain at the altar; he was well-nigh, as he said afterwards, a dead man.

With these priestly functions he united an assiduous devotion to his saints. By reading mass every morning, he invoked twenty-one particular saints, whom he had chosen as his helpers, taking three at a time, so as to include them all within the week.

As regards the most important problems of life, his study of the Scriptures gradually revealed to him the light which determined his future convictions. The path had already been pointed out to him by the words of St. Paul quoted by St. Bernard. When looking back, at the close of his life, on this his inward development, he tells us how perplexed he had been by what St. Paul said of the 'righteousness of God' (Rom. i. 17). For a long time he troubled himself about the expression, connecting it as he did, according to the ruling theology of the day, with God's righteousness in His punishment of sinners. Day and night he pondered over the meaning and context of the Apostle's words. But at length, he adds, God in His great mercy revealed to him that what St. Paul and the gospel proclaimed was a righteousness given freely to us by the grace of God, Who forgives those who have faith in His message of mercy, and justifies them, and gives them eternal life. Therewith the gate of heaven was opened to him, and thenceforth the whole remaining purport of God's word became clearly revealed. Still it was only by degrees, during the latter portion of his stay at Erfurt, and even after that, that he arrived at this full perception of the truth.

Rom i 17

After their ordination the monks received the title of fathers. Luther was not as yet relieved of the duty of going out with a brother in quest of alms. But he was soon employed in the more important business of the Order, as, for instance, in transactions with a high official of the Archbishop, in which he displayed great zeal for the priesthood and for his Order.

With the Scholastic theology of his time, albeit even now in a path marked out by himself, his keen understanding and happy memory had enabled him to become thoroughly familiar. He was scarcely twenty-five years old when Staupitz, occupied with making provision for the newly-founded university of Wittenberg, recognised in him the right man for a professorial chair.

CHAPTER II.

CALL TO WITTENBERG. JOURNEY TO ROME.

WITTENBERG was at that time the youngest of the German universities. It was founded in 1502 by the Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, a man pre-eminent among the German princes, not only from his prudence and circumspection, but also from his faithful care for his country, his genuine love for knowledge, and his deep religious feeling. His country was not a rich one. Wittenberg itself was a poor, badly-built town of about three thousand inhabitants. But the Elector showed his wisdom above all by his right choice of men whom he consulted in his work, and to whose hands he entrusted its conduct. These, in their turn, were very careful to select talented and trustworthy teachers for the institution, which was to depend for its success on the attractions offered by pure learning, and not those of outward show and a luxurious style of life among the students. The supervision of theology was entrusted by Frederick to Staupitz, whom personally he held in high esteem, and who, together with the learned and versatile Martin Pollich of Melrichstadt, had already been the most active in his service in promoting the foundation of the university. Staupitz himself entered the theological faculty as its first Dean. A constant or regular application to his duties was rendered impossible by the multifarious business of his Order, and the journeys it entailed. But in his very capacity of Vicar-General, he strove to supply the theological needs of the university, and, by the means of education thus offered, to assist the members of his Order.

Already before this the Augustinian monks had had a settlement at Wittenberg, though little is known about it. A handsome convent was built for them in 1506. In a short time young inmates of this convent, and afterwards more monks of the same Order who came from other parts, entered the university as students and took academical degrees. The patron saint of the University was, next to the Virgin Mary, St. Augustine. Trutvetter of Erfurt became professor of theology at Wittenberg in 1507. It was early in the winter of 1508–9, when Staupitz, who had been re-elected for the second time, was still dean of the theological faculty, that Luther was suddenly and unexpectedly summoned thither. He had to obey not merely the advice and wish of an affectionate friend, but the will of the principal of his Order.

Philosophy

As hitherto he had simply graduated as a master in philosophy, and had not qualified himself academically for a professor of theology, Luther at first was only called on to lecture on those philosophical subjects which, as we have seen, occupied his studies at Erfurt. Theologians, it is true, had been entrusted with these duties, just as, here at Wittenberg, the first dean of the philosophical faculty was a theologian, and, in addition to that indeed, a member of the Augustinian Order. But from the beginning, Luther was anxious to exchange the province of philosophy for that of theology, meaning thereby, as he expressed it, that theology which searched into the very kernel of the nut, the heart of the wheat, the marrow of the bones. So far, he was already confident of having found a sure ground for his Christian faith, as well as for his inner life, and having found it, of being able to begin teaching others. Indeed, while busily engaged in his first lectures on philosophy, he was preparing to qualify himself for his theological degrees. Here also he had to begin with his baccalaureate, comprising in fact three different steps in the theological faculty, each of which had to be reached by an examination and disputation. The first step was that of bachelor of biblical knowledge, which qualified him to lecture on the Holy Scriptures. The second, or that of a *Sententiarius*, was necessary for lecturing on the chief compendium of mediæval School-theology, the so-called Sentences of Peter Lombardus, the due performance of which duty led to the attainment of the third step. Above the baccalaureate, with its three grades, came the rank of licentiate, which gave the right to teach the whole of theology, and lastly the formal, solemn admission as doctor of theology. Already, on March 9, 1509, Luther had attained his first step in the baccalaureate. At the end of six months he was qualified, by the statutes of the university, to reach the second step, and in the course of the next six months he actually reached it.

Bachelor
Sententiarius
Licentiate
D. D.

But before gaining his new rights as a *Sententiarius*, he was summoned back by the authorities of his Order to Erfurt. The reason we do not know; we only know that he entered the theological faculty there as professor, receiving, at the same time, the recognition of the academical rank he had acquired at Wittenberg. At Erfurt he remained about three terms, or eighteen months. After that he returned to the university at Wittenberg. Trutvetter, towards the end of 1510, had received a summons back to Erfurt from Wittenberg. The void thus caused by his summons away may have had something to do with Luther's return thither. At all events his position at Wittenberg was now vastly different from that which he had previously held. No theologian, his superior in years or fame, was any longer above him.

Luther in Er
to Theo. pro

Ere long, however, Luther received another commission from his Order; a proof of the confidence reposed also in his zeal for the Order, his practical understanding, and his energy. It was about a matter in which, by Staupitz's desire, other Augustinian convents in Germany were to enter into a union with the reformed convents and the

Vicar of the Order. As opposition had been raised, Luther in 1511, no doubt at the suggestion of Staupitz, was sent on this matter to Rome, where the decision was to be given. The journey thither and back may easily have taken six weeks or more. According to rule and custom, two monks were always sent out together, and a lay-brother was given them for service and company. They used to make their way on foot. In Rome the brethren of the Order were received by the Augustinian monastery of Maria del Popolo. Thus Luther went forth to the great capital of the world, to the throne of the Head of the Church. He remained there four weeks, discharging his duties, and surrounded by all her monuments and relics of ecclesiastical interest.

No definite account of the result of the business he had to transact, has been handed down to us. We only learn that Staupitz, the Vicar of the Order, was afterwards on friendly relations with the convents which had opposed his scheme, and that he refrained from urging any more unwelcome innovations. For us, however, the most important parts of this journey are the general observations and experiences which Luther made in Italy, and, above all, at the Papal chair itself. He often refers to them later in his speeches and writings, in the midst of his work and warfare, and he tells us plainly how important to him afterwards was all that he there saw and heard.

Rome / 1511

The devotion of a pilgrim inspired him as he arrived at the city which he had long regarded with holy veneration. It had been his wish, during his troubles and heart-searchings, to make one day a regular and general confession in that city. When he came in sight of her, he fell upon the earth, raised his hands, and exclaimed 'Hail to thee, holy Rome!' She was truly sanctified, he declared afterwards, through the blessed martyrs, and their blood which had flowed within her walls. But he added, with indignation at himself, how he had run like a crazy saint on a pilgrimage through all the churches and catacombs, and had believed what turned out to be a mass of rank lies and impostures. He would gladly then have done something for the welfare of his friends' souls by mass-reading and acts of devotion in places of particular sanctity. He felt downright sorry, he tells us, that his parents were still alive, as he might have performed some special act to release them from the pains of purgatory.

But in all this he found no real peace of mind: on the contrary, his soul was stirred to the consciousness of another way of salvation which had already begun to dawn upon him. Whilst climbing, on his knees and in prayer, the sacred stairs which were said to have led to the Judgment-hall of Pilate, and whither, to this day, worshippers are invited by the promise of Papal absolutions, he thought of the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (i. 17), 'The just shall live by faith. As for any spiritual enlightenment and consolation, he found none among the priests and monks of Rome. He was struck indeed with the external administration of business and the nice arrangement of legal matters at the Papal see. But he was shocked by all that he observed of the moral and religious life and doings at this centre of Christianity; the immorality of the clergy, and particularly of the highest dignitaries of the Church, who thought themselves highly virtuous if they abstained from the very grossest offences; the wanton levity with which the most sacred names and things were treated; the frivolous unbelief, openly expressed among themselves by the spiritual pastors and masters of the Church. He complains of the priests scrambling through mass as if they were juggling; while he was reading one mass, he found they had finished seven: one of them once urged him to be quick by saying 'Get on, get on, and make haste to send her Son home to our Lady.' He heard jokes even made about the priests when consecrating the elements at mass, repeating in Latin the words 'Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain:

wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain.' He often remarked in later years how they would apply in derision the term 'good Christian' to those who were stupid enough to believe in Christian truth, and to be scandalised by anything said to the contrary. No one, he declared, would believe what villanies and shameful doings were then in vogue, if they had not seen and heard them with their own eyes and ears. But the truth of his testimony is confirmed by those very men whose life and conduct so shocked and revolted him. He must have been indignant, moreover, at the contemptuous tone in which the 'stupid Germans' or 'German beasts' were spoken of, as persons entitled to no notice or respect at Rome.

He was astonished at the pomp and splendour which surrounded the Pope when he appeared in public. He speaks, as an eye-witness, of the processions, like those of a triumphing monarch. But the horrible stories were then still fresh at Rome of the late Pope Alexander and his children, the murder of his brother, the poisoning, the incest, and other crimes. Of the then Pope, Julius II., Luther heard nothing reported, except that he managed his temporal affairs with energy and shrewdness, made war, collected money, and contracted and dissolved, entered into and broke, political alliances. At the time of Luther's visit, he was just returning from a campaign in which he had conducted in person the sanguinary siege of a town. Luther did not fail to observe that he had established in the sacred city an excellent body of police, and that he caused the streets to be kept clean, so that there was not much pestilence about. But he looked upon him simply as a man of the world, and afterwards fulminated against him as a strong man of blood.

All these experiences at Rome did not, however, then avail to shake Luther's faith in the authority of the hierarchy which had such unworthy ministers; though, later on, when he was forced to attack the Papacy itself, they made it easier for him to shape his judgment and conclusions. 'I would not have missed seeing Rome,' he then declared, 'for a hundred thousand florins, for I might then have felt some apprehension that I had done injustice to the Pope. But as we see, we speak.'

During his visit he also roamed about among the ruins of the ancient capital of the world, and was astonished at the remains of bygone worldly splendour. The works of the new art which Pope Julius was then beginning to call into existence, did not appear to have particularly engaged his attention. The Pope was then progressing with the building of the new Church of St. Peter. The indulgence, of which the proceeds were to enable the completion of this vast undertaking, led afterwards to the struggle between the Augustinian monk and the Papacy.

CHAPTER III.

LUTHER AS THEOLOGICAL TEACHER, TO 1517

On his return to his Wittenberg convent, Luther was made sub-prior. At the university he entered fully upon all the rights and duties of a teacher of theology, having been made licentiate and doctor. Here again it was Staupitz, his friend and spiritual superior, who urged this step: Luther's own wish was to leave the university and devote himself entirely to the office of his Order. The Elector Frederick, who had been struck with Luther by hearing one of his sermons, took this, the first opportunity, of showing him personal sympathy, by offering to defray the expenses of his degree. Luther was reluctant to accept this, and years after he was fond of showing his friends a pear-tree in the courtyard of the convent, under which he discussed the matter with Staupitz, who, however, insisted on his demand. He must have felt the more sensibly the responsibility of his new task, from his own personal strivings after new and true theological light. It was a satisfaction to him afterwards, amidst the endless and unexpected labours and contests which his vocation brought with it, to reflect that he had undertaken it, not from choice, but so entirely from obedience. 'Had I known what I now know,' he would exclaim in his later trials and dangers, 'not ten horses would ever have dragged me into it.'

After the necessary preliminaries and customary forms, he received on October 4, 1512, the rights of a licentiate, and on the 18th and 19th was solemnly admitted to the degree of doctor. As licentiate he promised to defend with all his power the truth of the gospel, and he must have had this oath particularly in his mind when he afterwards appealed to the fact of his having sworn on his beloved Bible to preach it faithfully and in its purity. His oath as doctor, which followed, bound him to abstain from doctrines condemned by the Church and offensive to pious ears. Obedience to the Pope was not required at Wittenberg, as it was at other universities.

Others, besides Staupitz, expected from the beginning something original and remarkable from the new professor. Pollich, the first great representative of Wittenberg in its early days, and who died in the following year, said of him, 'This monk will revolutionise the whole system of Scholastic teaching.' He seems, like others whom we hear of afterwards, to have been especially struck with the depth of Luther's eyes, and thought that they must reveal the working of a wonderful mind.

A new theology, in fact, presented itself at once to Luther in the subject which, as doctor, he chose and exclusively adhered to in his lectures. This was the Bible, the very book of which the study was so generally undervalued in School-theology, which so many doctors of theology scarcely knew, and which was usually so hastily forsaken for those Scholastic sentences and a corresponding exposition of ecclesiastical dogmas.

Luther began with lectures upon the Psalms. It is his first work on theology which has remained to posterity. We still possess a Latin text of the Psalter furnished with running notes for his lectures, and also his own manuscript of those lectures themselves. In these also he states that his task was imposed upon him by a distinct command: he frankly confessed that as yet he was insufficiently acquainted with the Psalms; a comparison of his notes and lectures shows further, how continually he was engaged in prosecuting these studies. His explanations indeed fall short of what is required at present, and even of what he himself required later on. He still follows wholly the mediæval practice of thinking it necessary to find, throughout the words of the Psalmist, pictorial allegories relating to Christ, His work of salvation, and His people. But he was thus enabled to propound, while explaining the Psalms, the fundamental principles of that doctrine of salvation which for some years past had taken such hold on his inmost thoughts and so engrossed his theological studies. And in addition to the fruits of his researches in Scripture, especially in the writings of St. Paul, we observe the use he made of the works of St. Augustine. His acquaintance with the latter did not commence until years after he had joined the Order, and had acquired independently an intimate knowledge of the Bible. It was mainly through them that he was enabled to comprehend the teaching of St. Paul, and to find how the doctrine of Divine grace, which we have already alluded to, was based on Pauline authority. Thus the founder of the Order became, as it were, his first teacher among human theologians.

From his lectures on the Psalms Luther proceeded a few years later to an exposition of those Epistles which were to him the main source of his new belief in God's mercy and justice, namely, the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians.

In the convent also at Wittenberg, the direction of the theological studies of the brethren was entrusted to Luther. His fellow-labourer in this field was his friend John Lange, who had been with him also in the convent at Erfurt. He was distinguished for a rare knowledge of Greek, and was therefore a valuable help even to Luther, to whom he was indebted in turn for a prolific advance in learning of another kind. Closely allied with Luther also was Wenzeslaus Link, the prior of the convent, who obtained his degree as doctor of the theological faculty a year before him. These men were drawn together by similarity of ideas, and by a strong and enduring personal friendship; they had possibly been acquainted at the school at Magdeburg. The new life and activity awakened at Wittenberg attracted clever young monks more and more from a distance. The convent, not yet quite finished, had scarcely room enough for them, or means for their maintenance.

When in 1515 the associated convents had to choose at Gotha, on a chapter-day, their new authorities, Luther was appointed, Staupitz being still Vicar-General, the Provincial Vicar for Meissen and Thuringia. He obtained by this office the superintendence of eleven convents, to which in the next year he paid the customary visitation. In person, by word of mouth, and equally by letters, we see him labouring with self-sacrificing zeal for the spiritual welfare of those committed to his care, for the correction of bad monks, for the comfort of those oppressed with temptations, as also for the temporal and domestic, and even the legal business of the different convents.

In addition to his academical duties, he performed double service as a preacher. In the first place he had to preach in his convent, as he had already done at Erfurt. When the new convent at Wittenberg was opened, the church was not yet ready; and in a small, poor, tumbledown chapel close by, made up of wood and clay, he began to preach the gospel and unfold the power of his eloquence. When, shortly after, the town-priest of Wittenberg became weak and ailing, his congregation pressed Luther to occupy the pulpit in his place. He performed these different duties with alacrity, energy, and power. He would preach sometimes daily for a week together, sometimes even three times in one day; during Lent in 1517 he gave two sermons every day in addition to his lectures at the university. The zeal which he displayed in proclaiming the gospel to his hearers in church, was quite as new and peculiar to himself as the lofty interest he imparted to his professorial lectures on the Scriptures.

Melancthon says of these first lectures by Luther on the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans, that after a long and dark night, a new day was now seen to dawn on Christian doctrine. In these lectures Luther pointed out the difference between the law and the gospel. He refuted the errors, then predominant in the Church and schools, the old teaching of the Pharisees, that men could earn forgiveness by their works, and that mere outward penance would justify them in the sight of God. Luther called men back to the Son of God; and just as John the Baptist pointed to the Lamb of God who bore our sins, so Luther showed how, for his Son's sake, God in His mercy will forgive us our sins, and how we must accept such mercy in faith.

In fact, the whole groundwork of that Christian faith on which the inner life of the Reformer rests, for which he fought, and which gave him strength and fresh courage for the fight, lies already before us in his lectures and sermons during those years, and increases in clearness and decision. The 'new day' had, in reality, broken upon his eyes. That fundamental truth which he designated later as the article by which a Christian Church must stand or fall, stands here already firmly established, before he in the least suspects that it would lead him to separate from the Catholic Church, or that his adopting it would occasion a reconstruction of the Church. The primary question around which everything else centred, remained always this—how he, the sinful man, could possibly stand before God and obtain salvation. With this came the question as to the righteousness of God; and now he was no longer terrified by the avenging justice of God, wherewith He threatens the sinner; but he recognised and saw the meaning of that righteousness declared in the gospel (Rom. i. 17, iii. 25), by which the merciful God justifies the faithful, in that He of His own grace re-establishes them in His sight, and effects an inward change, and lets them thenceforth, like children, enjoy His fatherly love and blessing. Luther, in teaching now that justification proceeds from faith, rejects, above all, the notion that man by any outward acts of his own can ever atone for his sins and merit the favour of God. He reminds us, moreover, with regard to moral works especially, that good fruits always presuppose a good tree, upon which alone they can grow, and that, in like manner, goodness can only proceed from a man, if and when, in his inward being, his inward thoughts, tendencies, and feelings, he has already become good ; he must be righteous himself, in a word, before he works righteousness. But it is faith, and faith alone, which in the inward man determines real communion with God. Then only, and gradually, can a man's own inner being, trusting to God, and by means of His imparted grace, become truly renovated and purged from sin. Had Luther, indeed, made salvation depend on such a righteousness, derived from a man's own works, as should satisfy the holy God, the very consciousness of his own sins and infirmities would have made him despair of such salvation. Moreover, all the working of the Holy Spirit, and His gifts in our hearts, presuppose that we are already participators of the forgiving mercy and grace of God, and are received into communion with Him. To this, as Luther teaches after St. Paul, we can only attain through faith in the joyful message of His mercy, in His compassion, and in His Son, whom He has sent to be our Redeemer. Thus he speaks of faith, even in his earliest notes on the Psalter, as the keystone, the marrow, the short road. The worst enemy, in his sight, is self-righteousness ; he confesses having had to combat it himself.

Herein also Luther found the theology of St. Augustine in accord with the testimony of the great Apostle. While studying that theology, his conviction of the power of sin and the powerlessness of man's own strength to overcome it, grew more and more decided. But St. Paul taught him to understand that belief somewhat differently to St. Augustine. To Luther it was not merely a recognition of objective truths or historical facts. What he understood by it, with a clearness and decision which are wanting in St. Augustine's teaching, was the trusting of the heart in the mercy offered by the message of salvation, the personal confidence in the Saviour Christ and in that which He has gained for us. With this faith, then, and by the merits and mediation of the Saviour in whom this faith is placed, we stand before God, we have already the assurance of being known by God and of being saved, and we are partakers of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies more and more the inner man. According to St. Augustine, on the contrary, and to all Catholic theologians who followed his teaching, what will help us before God is rather that inward righteousness which God Himself gives to man by His Holy Spirit and the workings of His grace, or, as the expression was, the righteousness infused by God. The good, therefore, already existing in a Christian is so highly esteemed that he can thereby gain merit before the just God and even do more than is required of him. But to a conscience like Luther's, which applied so severe a standard to human virtue and works, and took such stern count of past and present sins, such a doctrine could bring no assurance of forgiveness, mercy, and salvation. It was in faith alone that Luther had found this assurance, and for it he needed no merits of his own. The happy spirit of the child of God, by its own free impulse, would produce in a Christian the genuine good fruit pleasing in God's sight. It was a long time before Luther himself became aware how he differed on this point from his chief teacher amongst theologians. But we see the difference appear at the very root and beginning of his new doctrine of salvation; and it comes out finally, based on apostolic authority, clear and sharp, in the theology of the Reformer.

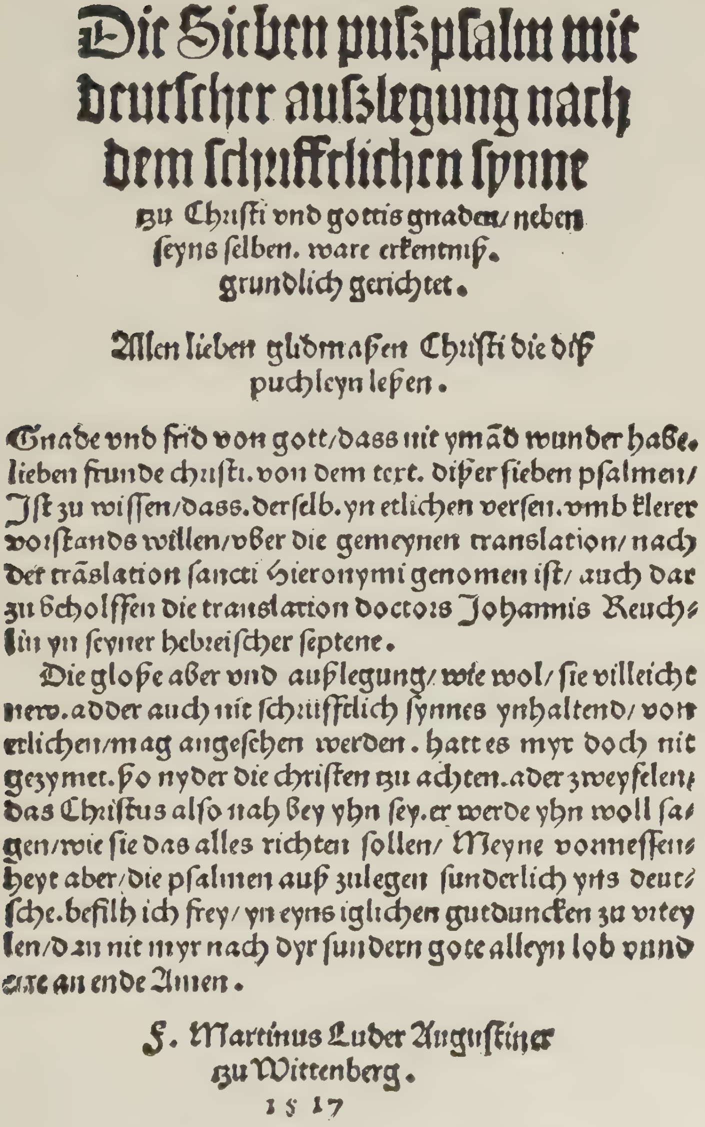
And inseparably connected with this is what Melancthon said about the Law and the Gospel. Luther himself always declared in later days, that the whole understanding of the truth of Christian salvation, as revealed by God, depends on a right perception of the relation of one to the other, and this very relation he explained, shortly before the beginning of his contest with the Church, upon the authority of St. Paul's Epistles. The Law is to him the epitome of God's demands with regard to will and works, which still the sinner cannot fulfil. The Gospel is the blessed offer and announcement of that forgiving mercy of God which is to be accepted in simple faith. By the Law says Luther, the sinner is judged, condemned, killed; he himself had to toil and disquiet himself under it, as though he were in the hands of a gaoler and executioner. The Gospel first lifts up those who are crushed, and makes them alive by the faith which the good message awakens in their hearts. But God works in both; in the one, a work which to Him, the God of love, would properly be strange; in the other, His own work of love, for which, however, he has first prepared the sinner by the former.

Whilst Luther was prosecuting his labours in this path, he became acquainted in 1516 with the sermons of the pious, deep-thinking theologian Tauler, who died in 1361; and at the same time an old theological tract, written not long after Tauler, fell into his hands, to which he gave the name of 'German Theology.' Now for the first time, and in the person of their noblest representatives, he was confronted with the Christian and theological views which were commonly designated as the practical German mysticism of the middle ages. Here, instead of the value which the mediæval Church, so addicted to externals, ascribed to outward acts and ordinances, he found the most devout absorption in the sentiments of real Christian religion. Instead of the barren, formal expositions and logical operations of the scholastic intellect, he found a striving and wrestling of the whole inner man, with all the mind and will, after direct communion and union with God, who Himself seeks to draw into this union the soul devoted to Him, and makes it become like to himself. Such a depth of contemplation and such fervour of a Christian mind Luther had not found even in an Augustine. He rejoiced to see this treasure written in his native German, and it certainly was the noblest German he had ever read. He felt himself marvellously impressed by this theology; he knew of no sermons, so he wrote to a friend, which agreed more faithfully with the gospel than those of Tauler. He published that tract—then not quite complete—in 1516, and again afterwards in 1518. It was the first publication from his hand. His further sermons and writings show how deeply he was imbued with its contents. The influences he here received had a lasting effect on the formation of his inner life and his theology

With regard to sin, he now learned that its deepest roots and fundamental character lay in our own wills, in self-love and selfishness. To enjoy communion with God it is necessary that the heart should put away all worldliness, and let its natural will be dead, so that God alone may live and work in us. So, as he says on the title-page of 'German Theology,' shall Adam die in us and Christ be made alive. But the essential peculiarity of Luther's doctrine of salvation, grounded as it was directly on Scripture, still remained intact, despite the theology no less of the mystics than of Augustine, and, after passing through these influences, developed its full independence during his struggles as a Reformer. For this communion with God he never thought it necessary, as the mystics maintained, to renounce one's personality and retire altogether from the world and things temporal: a purely passive attitude towards God, and a blessedness consisting in such an attitude, was not his highest or ultimate ideal. A man's personality, he held, should only be destroyed so far as it resists the will of God, and dares to assert its self-righteousness and merits before Him. The road to real communion with God was always that 'short road' of faith, in which the contrite sinner, who feels his personality crushed by the consciousness of sin, grasps the hand of Divine mercy, and is lifted up by it and restored. Christ was manifested, as the mystics said with Scripture, in order that the man's personality should die with Him, and imitate Him in self-renunciation. But the faith, on which Luther insisted, saw in Christ above all the Saviour who has died for us, and who pleads for us before God with His holy life and conduct, that the faithful may obtain through Him reconciliation and salvation. What the Saviour is to us in this respect Luther has thus summarised in words of his own: 'Lord Jesus,' he says, 'Thou hast taken to Thyself what is mine, and given to me what is Thine.' The main divergence between Luther and the German mysticism of the middle ages consists primarily in a different estimate of the general relations between God and the moral personality of man. With the mystics, behind the Christian and religious, lay a metaphysical conception of God, as a Being of absolute power, superior to all destiny, apparently rich in attributes, but in reality an empty Abstraction,—above all, a Being who suffers nothing finite to exist in independence of Himself. With Luther the fundamental conception of God remained this, that He is the perfect Good, and that, in His perfect holiness, He is Love. This is the God by whom the sinner who has faith is restored and justified. From this conception as a starting-point, Luther acquired fresh strength and energy for advancing in the fight, whilst the pious mystic remained passively and quietly behind. From this also he learned to realise Christian liberty and moral duty in regard to daily life and its vocations, whilst the mystics remained shut off altogether from the world. The intimate connection between the conclusions to which the views of Tauler tended, and the principles from which Luther started, is shown further by the superior attraction which those sermons, so warmly recommended by Luther, continued to exercise upon members of the Evangelical, compared with those of the Catholic Church.

What Christ has suffered and done for us, and how we gain through Him the righteousness of God, peace, and real life, -these thoughts of practical religion pervaded now all Luther's discourses. To the saving knowledge of these facts he endeavoured to direct his lectures, and discarded the dogmatical inquiries and subtle investigations and speculations of School-theology. At first, and even in his sermons at the convent, he had employed in his exposition of Biblical truths, as was the custom of learned preachers, philosophical expressions and references to Aristotle and famous Scholastics. But latterly, and at the time we are speaking of, he had entirely left this off; and, as regards the form of his sermons, instead of a stiff, logical construction of sentences, he employed that simple, lively, powerful eloquence which distinguished him above all preachers of his time. In 1516 and 1517 he delivered a course of sermons on the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer before his town congregation, with the view of showing the connection of the truths of Christian religion. He further had printed in 1517, for Christian readers generally, an explanation of the seven penitential psalms. He wished, as the title stated, to expound them thoroughly in their Scriptural meaning, for setting forth the grace of Christ and God, and enabling true self-knowledge. It is the first of his writings, published by himself, and in the German language, which we possess; for the later lectures that were published were delivered by him in Latin, and the first sermons we have of his were also written by him in that language. We give here the title and preface from the original print.

Luther had now become possessed with a burning desire to refute, by means of the truth he had newly learned, the teaching and system of that School-theology on which he



Die Sieben pußpſalm mit
deutſcher außlegung nach
dem ſchrifftlichen ſynne
zu Chriſti vnd gottis gnaden/ neben
ſeyns ſelben. ware erkentniß.
grundlich gerichtet.

Allen lieben glidmaßen Chriſti die diß
puchleyn leßen.

Gnade vnd frid von gott/ dass nit ymād wunder habe. lieben frunde chriſti. von dem text. dißer ſieben pſalmen/ Iſt zu wiſſen/ dass. derſelb. yn etlichen verſen. vmb klerer vorſtands willen/ vber die gemeynen translation/ nach der trāslation ſancti Hieronymi genomen iſt/ auch dar zu beholffen die translation doctors Johannis Reuchlin yn ſeyner hebreiſcher ſeptene.

Die gloße aber vnd außlegung/ wie wol/ ſie villeicht new. adder auch nit ſchrifftlich ſynnes ynhaltend/ von etlichen/ mag angeſehen werden. hatt es myr doch nit gezymet. ßo nyder die chriſten zu achten. ader zweyfelen/ das Chriſtus alſo nah bey yhn ſey. er werde yhn woll ſagen/ wie ſie das alles richten ſollen/ Meyne vormeſſenheyt aber/ die pſalmen auß zulegen ſunderlich yns deutſche. befilh ich frey/ yn eyns iglichen gutduncken zu vrteylen/ dan nit myr nach dyr ſundern gote alleyn lob vnnd ere an ende Amen.

F. Martinus Luder Auguſtiner
zu Wittenberg.
1517

FIG. 6.—Title and Preface of Penitential Psalms.

himself had wasted so much time and labour, and by which he saw that same truth darkened and obstructed. He first attacked Aristotle, the heathen philosopher from whom this theology, he said, received its empty and perverted formalism, whose system of physics was worthless, and who, especially in his conception of moral life and moral good, was blind, since he knew nothing of the essence and ground of true righteousness. The Scholastics, as Luther himself remarked against them, had failed signally to understand the genuine original philosophy of Aristotle. But the real greatness and significance which must be allowed to that philosophy, in the development of human thought and knowledge, were far removed from those profound questions of Christian morality and religion which engrossed Luther's mind, and from those truths to which he again had to testify. In theses which formed the subject of disputation among his followers, Luther expressed with particular acuteness his own doctrine, and that of Augustine, concerning the inability of man, and the grace of God, and his opposition to the previously dominant Schoolmen and their Aristotle. He was anxious also to hear the verdict of others, particularly of his teacher Trutvetter, upon his new polemics.

He already could boast that, at Wittenberg, his, or as he called it, the Augustinian theology, had found its way to victory. It was adopted by the theologians who had taught there, though wholly in the old Scholastic fashion, before him, especially by Carlstadt, who soon strove to outbid him in this new direction, and who, later on, in his own zeal for reform, fell into disputes with the great Reformer himself, and also by Nicholas von Amsdorf, whom we shall see afterwards at Luther's side as his personal friend and strongest supporter. At Erfurt, Luther's former convent, his friend and sympathiser Lange was now prior, having returned thither from Wittenberg, where indeed his former teachers could not yet accommodate themselves to his new ways. Of great importance to Luther's work and position was his friendship with George Spalatin (properly Burkardt of Spelt), the court preacher and private secretary of the Elector Frederick, a conscientious, clear-minded theologian, and a man of varied culture and calm, thoughtful judgment. He was of the same age as Luther; he had been with him at Erfurt as a fellow-student, and at Wittenberg afterwards, whither he came as tutor to the prince, and had remained on terms of intimacy with him. To Luther he proved an upright, warm-hearted friend, and to the Elector a faithful and sagacious adviser. It was mainly due to his influence that the Elector showed such continued favour to Luther, marks of which he displayed by presents, such as that of a piece of richly-wrought cloth, which Luther thought almost too good for a monk's frock. Spalatin had also been a member of that circle of 'poets' at Erfurt; he kept up his connection

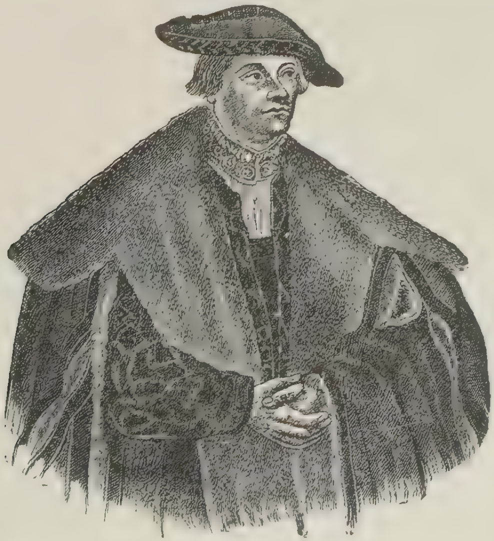


FIG. 7.—SPALATIN. (From L. Cranach's Portrait.)

with them, and corresponded with Erasmus, the head of the Humanists, and thus acted as a medium of communication for Luther in this quarter. Elsewhere in Germany we find the theology of Augustine or of St. Paul, as represented by Luther, taking root first among his friends at Nüremberg; in 1517 W. Link came there as prior of the Augustinian convent.

We have seen how Luther as a student associated with the young Humanists at Erfurt, and now, whilst striving further on that road of theology which he had marked out for himself, he was still accessible to the general interests of learning as represented by the Humanistic movement. He made the acquaintance, at least by letter, of the celebrated Mutianus Rufus of Gotha, whom those ‘poets’ honoured as their famous master, and with whom Lange and Spalatin maintained a respectful intercourse. When the Humanist John Reuchlin, then the first Hebrew scholar in Germany, was declared a heretic by zealous theologians and monks, on account of the protests he raised against the burning of the Rabbinical books of the Jews, and a fierce quarrel broke out in consequence, Luther, on being asked by Spalatin for his opinion, declared himself strongly for the Humanists against those who, being gnats themselves, tried to swallow camels. His heart, he said, was so full of this matter that his tongue could not find utterance. Still, the bold satire with which his former college friend Crotus and other Humanists lashed their opponents and held them up to ridicule, as in the famous ‘Epistolæ Virorum Obscurorum, was not to Luther's taste at all. The matter was to him far too serious for such treatment.

The first place among the men who revived the knowledge of antiquity, and strove to apply that knowledge for the benefit of their own times and particularly of theology, belongs undoubtedly to Erasmus, from his comprehensive learning, his refinement of mind, and his indefatigable industry. Just then, in 1516, he brought out a remarkable edition of the New Testament, with a translation and explanatory comments, which forms in fact an epoch in its history. Luther recognised his high talents and services, and was anxious to see him exercise the influence he deserved. He speaks of him in a letter to Spalatin as 'our Erasmus.' But nevertheless he steadily asserted his own independence, and reserved the right of free judgment about him. Two things he lamented in him; first of all

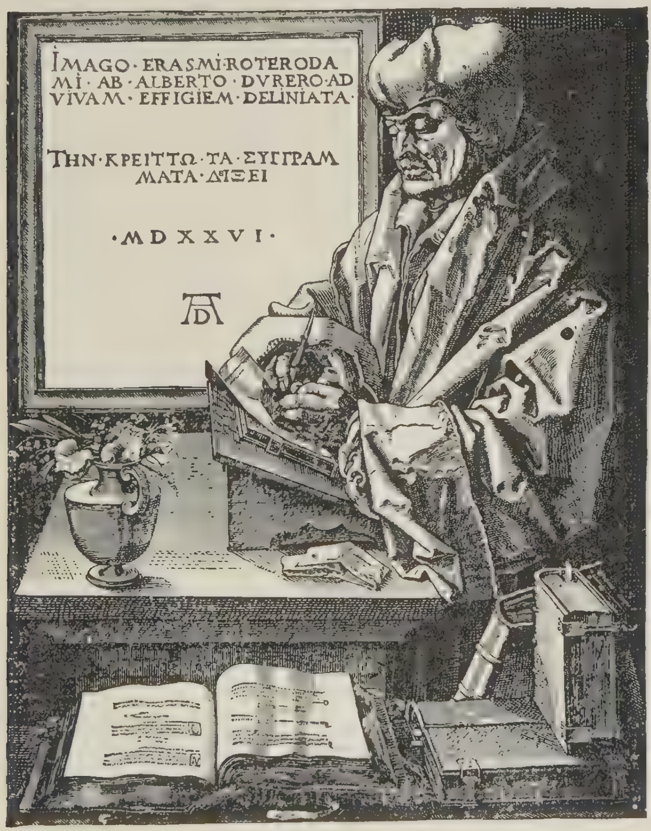


FIG. 8. -ERASMUS. (From the Portrait by A. Dürer.)

that he lacked, as was the case, the comprehension of that fundamental doctrine of St. Paul as to human sin and righteousness by faith; and further, that he made even the errors of the Church, which should be a source of genuine sorrow to every Christian, a subject of ridicule. He sought, however, to keep his opinion of Erasmus to himself, to avoid giving occasion to his jealous and unscrupulous enemies to malign him.

Bitterness and ill-will, aroused by Luther's words and works, were already not wanting among the followers of the hitherto dominant views of theology and the Church. But of any separation from the Church, her authority and her fundamental forms, he had as yet no intention or idea. Nor, on the other hand, did his enemies take occasion to obtain sentence of expulsion against him, until he found himself forced to conclusions which threatened the power and the income of the hierarchy.

As yet he had not expressed or entertained a thought against the ordinances which enslaved every Christian to the priesthood and its power. He certainly showed, in his new doctrine of salvation, the way which leads the soul, by simple faith in the message of mercy sent to all alike, to its God and Saviour. But he had no idea of disputing that everyone should confess to the priests, receive from them absolution, and submit to all the penances and ordinances ordained by the Church. And in that very doctrine of salvation he knew that he was at one with Augustine, the most eminent teacher of the Western Church, whilst the opposite views, however dominant in point of fact, had never yet received any formal sanction of the Church. Zealously, indeed, he soon exposed many practical abuses and errors in the religious life of the Church. But hitherto these were only such as had been long before complained of and combated by others, and which the Church had never expressly declared as essential parts of her own system. He gave vent freely to his opinions about the superstitious worship of saints, about absurd legends, about the heathen practice of invoking the saints for temporal welfare or success. But praying to the saints to intercede for us with God he still justified against the heresy originating with Huss, and with fervour he invoked the Virgin from the pulpit. He was anxious that the priests and bishops should do their duty much better and more conscientiously than was the case, and that instead of troubling themselves about worldly matters, they should care for the good of souls, and feed their flocks with God's word. He saw in the office of bishop, from the difficulties and temptations it involved, an office fraught with danger, and one therefore that he did not wish for his Staupitz. But the Divine origin and Divine right of the hierarchical offices of pope, bishop, and priest, and the infallibility of the Church, thus governed, he held inviolably sacred. The Hussites who broke from her were to him 'sinful heretics.' Nay, at that time he used the very argument by which afterwards the Romish Church thought to crush the principles and claims of the Reformation, namely, that if we deny that power of the Church and Papacy, any man may equally say that he is filled with the Holy Ghost; everyone will claim to be his own master, and there will be as many Churches as heads.

As yet he was only seeking to combat those abuses which were outside the spirit and teaching of the Catholic Church, when the scandals of the traffic in indulgences called him to the field of battle. And it was only when in this battle the Pope and the hierarchy sought to rob him of his evangelical doctrine of salvation, and of the joy and comfort he derived from the knowledge of redemption by Christ, that, from his stand on the Bible, he laid his hands upon the strongholds of this Churchdom.

PART III.

THE BREACH WITH ROME, UP TO THE DIET OF WORMS. 1517–21.

CHAPTER I.

THE NINETY-FIVE THESES.

THE first occasion for the struggle which led to the great division in the Christian world was given by that magnificent edifice of ecclesiastical splendour intended by the popes as the creation of the new Italian art; by the building, in a word, of St. Peter's Church, which had already been commenced when Luther was at Rome. Indulgences were to furnish the necessary means. Julius II. had now been succeeded on the Papal chair by Leo X. So far as concerned the encouragement of the various arts, the revival of ancient learning, and the opening up, by that means, to the cultivated and upper classes of society of a spring of rich intellectual enjoyment, Leo would have been just the man for the new age. But whilst actively engaged in these pursuits and pleasures, he remained indifferent to the care and the spiritual welfare of his flock, whom as Christ's vicar he had undertaken to feed. The frivolous tone of morals that ruled at the Papal see was looked upon as an element of the new culture. As regards the Christian faith, a blasphemous saying is reported of Leo, how profitable had been the fable of Christ. He had no scruples in procuring money for the new church, which, as he said, was to protect and glorify the bones of the holy Apostles, by a dirty traffic, pernicious to the soul. Meanwhile, the popes were not ashamed to appropriate freely to their own needs that indulgence money, which was nominally for the Church and for other objects, such as the war against the Turks.

In order to appreciate the nature of these indulgences and of Luther's attack upon them, it is necessary first to realise more exactly the significance which the teachers of the Church ascribed to them. The simple statement that absolution or forgiveness of sins was sold for money, must in itself be offence enough to any moral Christian conscience; and we can only wonder that Luther proceeded so prudently and gradually towards his object of getting rid of indulgences altogether. But the arguments by which they were explained and justified did not sound so simple or concise. Forgiveness of sins, it was maintained, must be gained by penance, namely, by the so-called sacrament of penance, including the acts of private confession and priestly absolution. In this the father-confessor promised to him who had confessed his sins, absolution for them, whereby his guilt was forgiven and he was freed from eternal punishment. A certain contrition of the heart was required from him, even if only imperfect, and proceeding perhaps solely from the fear of punishment, but which nevertheless was deemed sufficient, its imperfection being supplied by the sacrament. But though absolved, he had still to

Fig. 9.—Leo X.
(From his Portrait by Raphael.)

discharge heavy burdens of temporal punishment, penances imposed by the Church, and chastisements which, in the remission of eternal punishment, God in His righteousness still laid upon him. If he failed to satisfy these penances in this life, he must, even if no longer in danger of hell, atone for the rest in the torments of the fire of purgatory. The indulgence now came in to relieve him. The Church was content with easier tasks, as, at that time, with a donation to the sacred edifice at Rome. And even this was made to rest on a certain basis of right. The Church, it was said, had to dispose of a treasure of merits which Christ and the saints, by their good works, had accumulated before the righteous God, and those riches were now to be so disposed of by Christ's representatives, that they should benefit the buyer of indulgences. In this manner penances which otherwise would have to be endured for years were commuted into small donations of money, quickly paid off. The contrition required for the forgiveness of sins was not altogether ignored; as, for instance, in the official announcements of indulgences, and in the letters or certificates granting indulgences to individuals in return for payment. But in those documents, as also in the sermons exhorting the multitude to purchase, the chief stress, so far as possible, was laid upon the payment. The confession, and with it the contrition, was also mentioned, but nothing was said about the personal remission of sins depending on this rather than on the money. Perfect forgiveness of sins was announced to him who, after having confessed and felt contrition, had thrown his contribution into the box. For the souls in purgatory nothing was required but money offered for them by the living. 'The moment the money tinkles in the box, the soul springs up out of purgatory.' A special tariff was arranged for the commission of particular sins, as, for example, six ducats for adultery.

The traffic in indulgences for the building of St. Peter's was delegated by commission from the Pope, over a large part of Germany, to Albert, Archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg. We shall meet with this great prince of the Church, as now in connection with the origin of the Reformation, so during its subsequent course. Albert, the brother of the Elector of Brandenburg, and cousin of the Grand-Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, stood in 1517, though only twenty-seven years old, already at the head of those two great ecclesiastical provinces of Germany; Wittenberg also belonged to his Magdeburg diocese. Raised to such an eminence and so rapidly by good fortune, he was filled with ambitious thoughts. He troubled himself little about theology. He loved to shine as the friend of the new

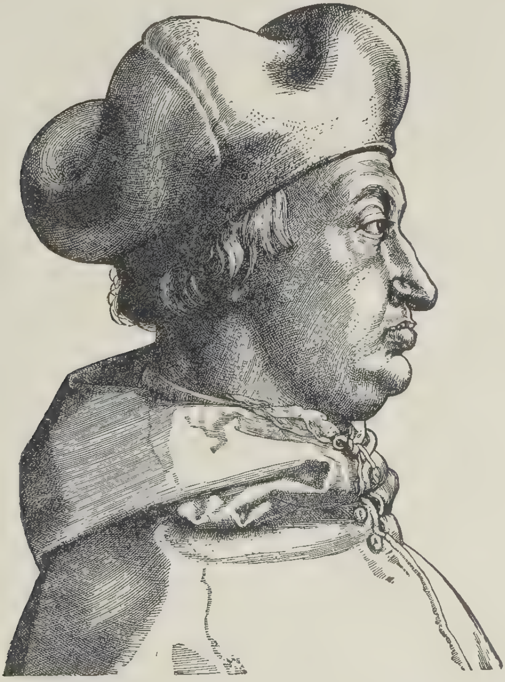
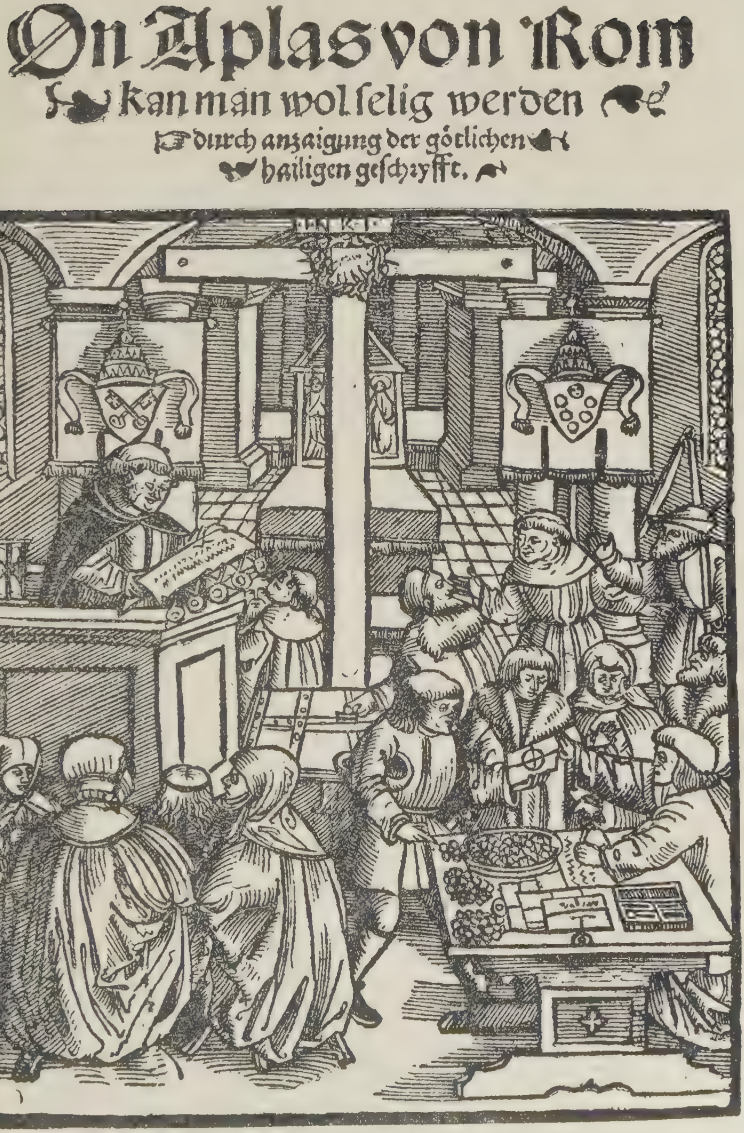


Fig. 10.—The Archbishop Albert. (From Dürer's engraving.)

Humanistic learning, especially of an Erasmus, and as patron of the fine arts, particularly of architecture, and to keep a court the splendour of which might correspond with his own dignity and love of art. For this his means were inadequate, especially as, on entering upon his Archbishopric of Mayence, he had had to pay, as was customary, a heavy sum to the Pope for the *pallium* given for the occasion. For this he had been forced to borrow thirty thousand gulden from the house of Fugger at Augsburg, and he found his aspirations incessantly crippled by want of money and by debts. He succeeded at last in striking a bargain with the Pope, by which he was allowed to keep half of the profits arising from the sale of indulgences, in order to repay the Fuggers their loan. Behind the preacher of indulgences, who announced God's mercy to the paying believers, stood the agents of that commercial house, who collected their share for their principals. The Dominican monk, John Tetzel, a profligate man, whom the Archbishop had appointed his sub-commissioner, drove the largest trade in this business with an audacity and a power of popular declamation well suited to his work.

Contemporaries have described the lofty and well-ordered pomp with which such a commissioner entered on the performance of his exalted duties. Priests, monks, and magistrates, schoolmasters and scholars, men, women, and children, went forth in procession to meet him, with songs and ringing of bells, with flags and torches. They entered the church together amidst the pealing of the organ. In the middle of the church, before the altar, was erected a large red cross, hung with a silken banner which bore the Papal arms. Before the cross was placed a large iron chest to receive the money; specimens of these chests are still shown in many places. Daily, by sermons, hymns, processions round the cross, and other means of attraction, the people were invited and urged to embrace this incomparable offer of salvation. It was arranged that auricular



On Aplas von Rom
kan man wol ſelig werden
durch anzaigung der götlichen
hailigen geſchꝛyfft.

FIG. 11. TITLE-PAGE OF A PAMPHLET WRITTEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION, with an Illustration showing the Sale of Indulgences.

confession should be taken wholesale. The main object was the payment, in return for which the 'contrite' sinners received a letter of indulgence from the commissioner, who, with a significant reference to the absolute power granted to himself, promised them complete absolution and the good opinion of their fellow-men.

We have evidence to show how Tetzel preached himself, and what he wished these sermons on indulgences to be like. Calling upon the people, he summoned all, and especially the great sinners, such as murderers and robbers, to turn to their God and receive the medicine which God, in his mercy and wisdom, had provided for their benefit. St. Stephen once had given up his body to be stoned, St. Lawrence his to be roasted, St. Bartholomew his to a fearful death. Would they not willingly sacrifice a little gift in order to obtain everlasting life? Of the souls in purgatory it was said, 'They, your parents and relatives, are crying out to you, "We are in the bitterest torments, you could deliver us by giving a small alms, and yet you will not. We have given you birth, nourished you, and left to you our temporal goods; and such is your cruelty that you, who might so easily make us free, leave us here to lie in the flames."'

To all who directly or indirectly, in public or in private, should in any way depreciate, or murmur against, or obstruct these indulgences, it was announced that, by Papal edict, they lay already by so doing under the ban of excommunication, and could only be absolved by the Pope or by one of his commissioners.

After Luther had once ventured to attack openly this sale of indulgences, it was admitted even by their defenders and the violent enemies of the Reformer, that in those days 'greedy commissioners, monks and priests, had preached unblushingly about indulgences, and had laid more stress upon the money than upon confession, repentance, and sorrow.' Christian people were shocked and scandalised at the abuse. It was asked whether indeed God so loved the money, that for the sake of a few pence He would leave a soul in everlasting torments, or why the Pope did not out of love empty the whole of purgatory, since he was willing to free innumerable souls in return for such a trifle as a contribution to the building of a church. But not one of them found it then expedient to incur the abuse and slander of a Tetzel by a word spoken openly against the gross misconduct the fruits of which were so important to the Pope and the Archbishop.

Tetzel now came to the borders of the Elector of Saxony's dominion, and to the neighbourhood of Wittenberg. The Elector would not allow him to enter his territory, on account of so much money being taken away, and accordingly he opened his trade at Jüterbok. Among those who confessed to Luther, there were some who appealed to letters of indulgence which they had purchased from him there.

In a sermon preached as early as the summer of 1516, Luther had warned his congregation against trusting to indulgences, and he did not conceal his aversion to the system, whilst admitting his doubts and ignorance as to some important questions on the subject. He knew that these opinions and objections would grieve the heart of his sovereign; for Frederick, who with all his sincere piety, still shared the exaggerated veneration of the middle ages for relics, and had formed a rich collection of them in the Church of the Castle and Convent at Wittenberg, which he was always endeavouring to enrich, rejoiced at the Pope's lavish offer of indulgences to all who at an annual exhibition of these sacred treasures should pay their devotions at the nineteen altars of this church. A few years before he had caused a 'Book of Relics' to be printed, which enumerated upwards of five thousand different specimens, and showed how they represented half a million days of indulgence. Luther relates how he had incurred the Elector's displeasure by a sermon preached in his Castle Church against indulgences: he preached, however, again before the exhibition held in February 1517. The honour and interest, moreover, of his university had to be considered, for that church

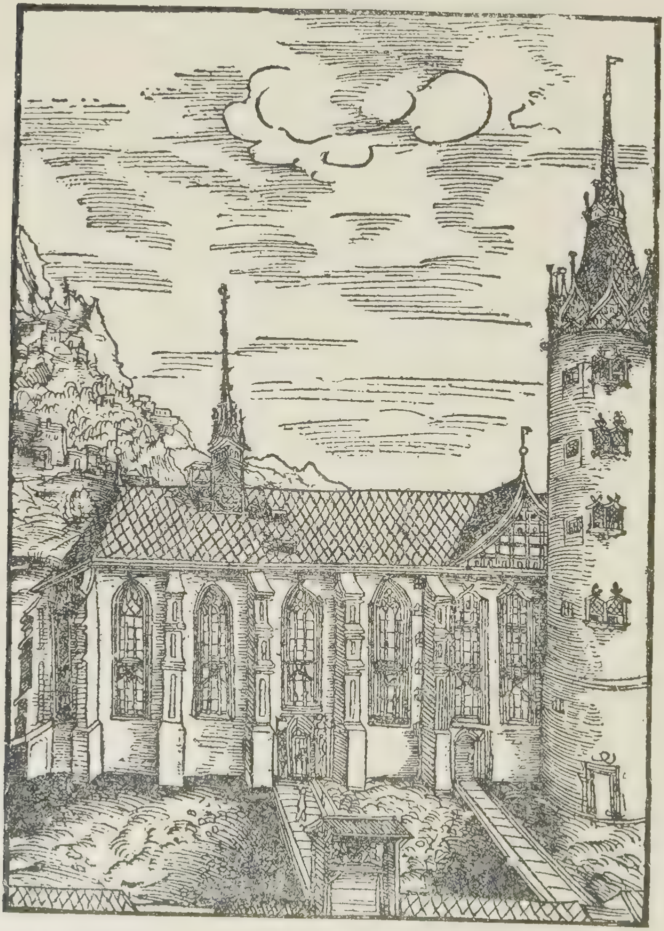


Fig. 12. The Castle Church. (From the Wittenberg Book of Relics 1509: the hill in the background is an addition by the artist.)

was attached to it, the professors were also dignitaries of the convent, and the university benefited by the revenues of the foundation.

Luther was then, as he afterwards described himself, a young doctor of divinity, ardent, and fresh from the forge. He was burning to protest against the scandal. But as yet he restrained himself and kept quiet. He wrote, indeed, on the subject to some of the bishops. Some listened to him graciously; others laughed at him; none wished to take any steps in the matter.

He longed now to make known to theologians and ecclesiastics generally his thoughts about indulgences, his own principles, his own opinions and doubts, to excite public discussion on the subject, and to awake and maintain the fray. This he did by the ninety-five Latin theses or propositions which he posted on the doors of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, on October 31, 1517, the eve of All Saints' Day and of the anniversary of the consecration of the Church. Few could comprehend them.

These theses were intended as a challenge for disputation. Such public disputations were then very common at the universities and among theologians, and they were meant to serve as means not only of exercising learned thought, but of elucidating the truth. Luther headed his theses as follows:—

'*Disputation to explain the virtue of indulgences.*—In charity and in the endeavour to bring the truth to light, a disputation on the following propositions will be held at Wittenberg, presided over by the Reverend Father Martin Luther . . . Those who are unable to attend personally may discuss the question with us by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.'

It was in accordance with the general custom of that time that, on the occasion of a high festival, particular acts and announcements, and likewise disputations at a university, were arranged, and the doors of a collegiate church were used for posting such notices.

The contents of these theses show that their author really had such a disputation in view. He was resolved to defend with all his might certain fundamental truths to which he firmly adhered. Some points he considered still within the region of dispute; it was his wish and object to make these clear to himself by arguing about them with others.

Recognising the connection between the system of indulgences and the view of penance entertained by the Church, he starts with considering the nature of true Christian repentance; but he would have this understood in the sense and spirit taught by Christ and the Scriptures, as, indeed, Staupitz had first taught it to him. He begins with the thesis 'Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He says Repent, desires that the whole life of the believer should be one of repentance.' He means, as the subsequent theses express it, that true inward repentance, that sorrow for sin and hatred of one's own sinful self, from which must proceed good works and mortification of the sinful flesh. The Pope could only remit his sin to the penitent so far as to declare that God had forgiven it.

Thus then the theses expressly declare that God forgives no man his sin without making him submit himself in humility to the priest who represents Him, and that He recognises the punishments enjoined by the Church in her outward sacrament of penance. But Luther's leading principles are consistently opposed to the customary announcements of indulgences by the Church. The Pope, he holds, can only grant indulgences for what the Pope and the law of the Church have imposed; nay, the Pope himself means absolution from these obligations only, when he promises absolution from all punishment. And it is only the living against whom those punishments are directed which the Church's discipline of penance enjoins: nothing, according to her own laws, can be imposed upon those in another world.

Further on, Luther declares, 'When true repentance is awakened in a man, full absolution from punishment and sin comes to him without any letters of indulgence.' At the same time he says that such a man would willingly undergo self-imposed chastisement, nay, he would even seek and love it.

Still, it is not the indulgences themselves, if understood in the right sense, that he wishes to be attacked, but the loose babble of those who sold them. Blessed, he says, be he who protests against this, but cursed be he who speaks against the truth of apostolic indulgences. He finds it difficult, however, to praise these to the people, and at the same time to teach them the true repentance of the heart. He would have them even taught that a Christian would do better by giving money to the poor than by spending it in buying indulgences, and that he who allows a poor man near him to starve draws down on himself, not indulgences, but the wrath of God. In sharp and scornful language he denounces the iniquitous trader in indulgences, and gives the Pope credit for the same abhorrence for the traffic that he felt himself. Christians must be told, he says, that if the Pope only knew of it, he would rather see St. Peter's Church in ashes, than have it built with the flesh and bones of his sheep.

Agreeably with what the preceding theses had said about the true penitent's earnestness and willingness to suffer, and the temptation offered to a mere carnal sense of security, Luther concludes as follows: 'Away therefore with all those prophets who say to Christ's people "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace, but welcome to all those who bid them seek the Cross of Christ, not the Cross which bears the Papal arms. Christians must be admonished to follow Christ their Master through torture, death, and hell, and thus through much tribulation, rather than by a carnal feeling of false security, hope to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Catholics objected to this doctrine of salvation advanced by Luther, that by trusting to God's free mercy and by undervaluing good works, it led to moral indolence. But on the contrary, it was to the very unbending moral earnestness of a Christian conscience, which, indignant at the temptations offered to moral frivolity, to a deceitful feeling of ease in respect to sin and guilt, and to a contempt of the fruits of true morality, rebelled against the false value attached to this indulgence money, that these Theses, the germ, so to speak, of the Reformation, owed their origin and prosecution. With the same earnestness he now for the first time publicly attacked the ecclesiastical power of the Papacy, in so far namely as, in his conviction, it invaded the territory reserved to Himself by the Heavenly Lord and Judge. This was what the Pope and his theologians and ecclesiastics could least of all endure.

On the same day that these theses were published, Luther sent a copy of them with a letter to the Archbishop Albert, his 'revered and gracious Lord and Shepherd in Christ.' After a humble introduction, he begged him most earnestly to prevent the scandalising and iniquitous harangues with which his agents hawked about their indulgences, and reminded him that he would have to give an account of the souls entrusted to his episcopal care.

The next day he addressed himself to the people from the pulpit, in a sermon he had to preach on the festival of All Saints. After exhorting them to seek their salvation in God and Christ alone, and to let the consecration by the Church become a real consecration of the heart, he went on to tell them plainly, with regard to indulgences, that he could only absolve from duties imposed by the Church, and that they dare not rely on him for more, nor delay on his account the duties of true repentance.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING INDULGENCES.

ANYONE who has heard that the great movement of the Reformation in Germany, and with it the founding of the Evangelical Church, originated in the ninety-five theses of Luther, and who then reads these theses through, might perhaps be surprised at the importance of their results. They referred, in the first place, to only one particular point of Christian doctrine, not at all to the general fundamental question as to how sinners could obtain forgiveness and be saved, but merely to the remission of punishments connected with penance. They contained no positive declaration against the most essential elements of the Catholic theory of penance, or against the necessity of oral confession, or of priestly absolution, and such subjects; they presupposed, in fact, the existence of a purgatory. Much of what they attacked, not one of the learned theologians of the middle ages or of those times had ever ventured to assert; as, for instance, the notion that indulgences made the remission of sins to the individual complete on the part of God. Moreover, the ruling principles of the theology of the day, which defended the system of indulgences, though resting mainly on the authority of the great Scholastic teacher Thomas Aquinas, were not adopted by other Scholastics, and had never been erected into a dogma by any decree of the Church. Theologians before Luther, and with far more acuteness and penetration than he showed in his theses, had already assailed the whole system of indulgences. And, in regard to any idea on Luther's part of the effects of his theses extending widely in Germany, it may be noticed that not only were they composed in Latin, but that they dealt largely with Scholastic expressions and ideas, which a layman would find it difficult to understand.

Nevertheless the theses created a sensation which far surpassed Luther's expectations. In fourteen days, as he tells us, they ran through the whole of Germany, and were immediately translated and circulated in German. They found, indeed, the soil already prepared for them, through the indignation long since and generally aroused by the shameless doings they attacked; though till then nobody, as Luther expresses it, had liked to bell the cat, nobody had dared to expose himself to the blasphemous clamour of the indulgence-mongers and the monks who were in league with them, still less to the threatened charge of heresy.

On the other hand, the very impunity with which this traffic in indulgences had been maintained throughout German Christendom, had served to increase from day to day the audacity of its promoters. Ranged on the side of these doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, the chief mainstay of this trade, stood the whole powerful order of the Dominicans. And to this order Tetzel himself, the sub-commissioner of indulgences, belonged. Already other doctrines of the Pope's authority, of his power over the salvation of the human soul, and the infallibility of his decisions, had been asserted with ever-increasing boldness. The mediæval writings of Thomas Aquinas had conspicuously tended to this result. And a climax had just been reached at a so-called General Council, which met at Rome shortly after Luther's visit there, and continued its sittings for several years.

Tetzel, who hitherto had only made himself notorious as a preacher, or rather as a bawling mountebank, now answered Luther with two series of theses of his own, drawn up in learned scholastic form. One Conrad Wimpina, a theologian of the university of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, whom the Archbishop Albert had recommended, assisted

Tetzel in this work. The university of Frankfort immediately made Tetzel doctor of theology, and thus espoused his theses. Three hundred Dominican monks assembled round him while he conducted an academical disputation upon them. The doctrines he now advanced were the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas. But at the same time he took care to make the question of the Pope's position and power the cardinal point at issue : he and his patrons knew well enough, that for Luther, who in his theses had touched upon this question so significantly though so briefly, this was the most fatal blow that he could deal. 'Christians must be taught,' he declared, 'that in all that relates to faith and salvation, the judgment of the Pope is absolutely infallible, and that all observances connected with matters of faith on which the Papal see has expressed itself, are equivalent to Christian truths, even if they are not to be found in Scripture.' With distinct reference to his opponent, but without actually mentioning him by name, he insists that whoever defends heretical error must be held to be excommunicated, and if he fails within a given time to make satisfaction, incurs by right and law the most frightful penalties. Furthermore, he argued—and this has always been held up against Luther and Protestantism—that if the authority of the Church and Pope should not be recognised, every man would believe only what was pleasing to himself and what he found in the Bible, and thus the souls of all Christendom would be imperilled.

Luther's theses now found another assailant, and one stronger even than Tetzel, in the person of a Dominican and Thomist, one Sylvester Mazolini of Prierio (Prierias), master of the sacred palace at Rome, and a confidant of the Pope. He too, like Tetzel, based his chief contention on the question of Papal authority, and was the first to carry that contention to an extreme. The Pope, he said, is the Church of Rome; the Romish Church is the Universal Christian Church; whoever disputes the right of the Romish Church to act entirely as she may, is a heretic. In this way he treated as contemptuously as he could the obscure German, whose theses, that 'bite like a cur,' as he expressed it, he only wished to dismiss with all despatch.

Another Dominican, James van Hoogstraten, prior at Cologne, who had already figured as the prime zealot in the affair about Reuchlin, which he was still prosecuting, now demanded, in his preface to a pamphlet on that subject, that Luther should be sent to the stake as a dangerous heretic.

But a far more important, and to Luther an utterly unexpected opponent, appeared in the person of John Eck, professor at the university of Ingolstadt, and canon at Eichstädt. He was a man of very extensive learning in the earlier and later Scholastic theology of the Church; he was a sharp-witted and ready controversialist, and he knew how to use his weapons in disputations. He was fully conscious of these gifts, and made a bold push to advance himself by their means, whilst troubling himself very little in reality about the high and sacred issues involved in the dispute. He sought to keep on friendly and useful relations with other circles than those of Scholastic theology, such as with learned Humanists, and a short time before, with Luther himself and his colleague Carlstadt, to whom he had been introduced through a jurist of Nüremberg named Scheuerl. Luther, after the publication of his theses, had written a friendly letter to Eck. What then was his surprise to find himself attacked by Eck in a critical reply entitled 'Obelisks.' The tone of his remarks was as wounding, coarse, and vindictive as their substance was superficial. They aimed a well-meditated blow, by stigmatising Luther's propositions as Bohemian poison, mere Hussite heresy. Eck, when reproached for such a breach of friendship, declared that he had written the book for his bishop of Eichstädt, and not with any view of publication.

Luther himself, loud as was his call to battle in his theses, had still no intention of engaging in a general contest about the leading principles of the Church. He had not yet realised the whole extent and bearings of the question about indulgences. Referring afterwards to the rapid circulation of his theses through Germany, and to the fame which his onslaught had earned him, he says, 'I did not relish the fame, for I myself was not aware of what there was in the indulgences, and the song was pitched too high for my voice.' People far and wide were proud of the man who spoke out so boldly in his theses, while the multitude of doctors and bishops kept silence; but he still stood alone before the public, confronting the storm which he had aroused against himself. He did not conceal the fact, that now and then he felt strange and anxious about his position. But he had learned to take his stand singly and firmly on the word of Scripture, and on the truth which God therein revealed to him and brought home to his conviction. He was only the more strengthened in that conviction by the replies of his opponents; for he must well have been amazed at their utter want of Scriptural reference to disprove his conclusions, and at the blind subservience with which they merely repeated the statements of their Scholastic authorities. The arrogant reply of Prierias, his opponent of highest rank, seemed to him particularly poor. In confident words Luther assures his friends of his conviction that what he taught was the purest theology, that what he upheld and his opponents attacked, was a revelation direct from God. He knew too, that, in the words of St. Paul, he had to preach what to the holiest of the Jews was a stumbling-block, and to the wisest of the Greeks foolishness. He was none the less ready to do so, that Jesus Christ, his Lord, might say of him, as He said once of that Apostle, 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.' Luther's enemies in the Romish Church have thought to see in these words an instance of boundless self-assertion on the part of an individual subject.

From henceforth Luther, while pursuing with unabated zeal his active duties at the university and in the pulpit at Wittenberg, and taking up his pen again and again to write short pamphlets of a simple and edifying kind, occupied himself untiringly with controversial writings, with the object partly of defending himself against attacks, partly of establishing on a firm basis the principles he had set forth, and of further investigating and making plain the way of true Christian knowledge. He first addressed himself to German Christendom, in German, in his 'Sermon on Indulgences and Grace.' His inward excitement is shown by the vehemence and ruggedness of expression which now and henceforth marked his polemical writings. It recalls to mind the tone then commonly met with not only among ordinary monks, but even in the controversies of theologians and learned men, and in which Luther's own opponents, especially that high Roman theologian, had set him the example. In Luther we see now, throughout his whole method of polemics, as we shall see still more later on, a mighty, Vulcanic, natural power breaking forth, but always regulated by the humblest devotion to the lofty mission that his conscience has imposed upon him. Even in his most vehement outbursts we never fail to catch the tender expressions of a Christian warmth and fervour of the heart, and a loftiness of language corresponding to the sacredness of the subject.

In the midst of these labours and controversies, Luther had to undertake a journey in the spring of 1518 (about the middle of April) to a chapter general of his Order at Heidelberg, where, according to the rules, a new Vicar was chosen after a triennial term of office. His friends feared the snares that his enemies might have prepared for him on the road. He himself did not hesitate for a moment to obey the call of duty.

The Elector Frederick, who owed him at least a debt of gratitude for having helped to keep his territory free from the rapacious Tetzel, but who, both now and afterwards, conscientiously held aloof from the contest, gave proof on this occasion of his undiminished kindness and regard for him, in a letter he addressed to Staupitz. He writes as follows:—'As you have required Martin Luder to attend a Chapter at Heidelberg, it is his wish, although we grudge giving him permission to leave our university, to go there and render due obedience. And as we are indebted to your suggestion for this excellent doctor of theology, in whom we are so well pleased, ... it is our desire that you will further his safe return here, and not allow him to be delayed.' He also gave Luther cordial letters of introduction to Bishop Laurence of Würzburg, through whose town his road passed, and to the Count Palatine Wolfgang, at Heidelberg. From both of these, though many had already declaimed against him as a heretic, he met with a most friendly and obliging reception.

His relations, moreover, at Heidelberg with his fellow-members of the Order, and, above all, with Staupitz, remained unclouded. Staupitz was re-elected here as Vicar of the Order; the office of provincial Vicar passed from Luther to John Lange, of Erfurt, his intimate friend and fellow-thinker. The question about indulgences had not entered at all into the business of the chapter. But at a disputation held in the convent, according to custom, Luther presided, and wrote for it some propositions embodying the fundamental points of his doctrines concerning the sinfulness and powerlessness of man, and righteousness, through God's grace, in Christ, and against the philosophy and theology of Aristotelian Scholasticism. He attracted the keen interest of several young inmates of the convent who afterwards became his coadjutors, such as John Brenz, Erhardt Schnepf, and Martin Butzer. They marvelled at his power of drawing out the meaning from the Scriptures, and of speaking not only with clearness and decision, but also with refinement and grace. Thus his journey served to promote at once his reputation and his influence.

On his return to Wittenberg on May 15, after an absence of five weeks, he hastened to complete a detailed explanation in Latin of the contents of his theses, under the title of 'Solutions,' the greatest and most important work that he published at this period of the contest.

The most valuable fruit of the controversy so far as regards Luther and his later work, and evidence of which is given in these 'Solutions,' was the advance he had made, and had been compelled to make, in the course of his own self-reasoning and researches. New questions presented themselves: the inward connection of the truth became gradually manifest: new results forced themselves upon him: his anxiety to solve his difficulties still continued.

Luther in his theses, when speaking of the call of Jesus to repentance, had never indeed admitted that the sacrament of penance enjoined by the Church, with auricular confession and the penances and satisfactions imposed by the priest, was based on God's command or the authority of the Bible. He now openly acknowledged and declared that these ecclesiastical acts were not enjoined by Christ at all, but solely by the Pope and the Church.

The contest about the indulgences granted by the Pope in respect of these acts, opened up now the doctrine of the so-called treasures of the Church, on which the Pope drew for his bounty. Luther, while conceding to the Pope the right of dispensing indulgences in the sense understood by himself, guarded himself against admitting that the merits of Christ constituted that treasure, and so should be disposed of by the Pope in this manner: the dispensation of indulgences rested simply on the Papal power of the keys. It was now objected to him that herein he was going counter to an express and duly recorded declaration of a pope, Clement VI., namely, that the merits of Christ were undoubtedly to be dispensed in indulgences. Luther, who in his theses against the abuse of indulgences had abstained as yet from propounding anything which might be inconsistent with the ascertained meaning of the Pope, now insisted without hesitation on this contradiction. That Papal pronouncement, he declared, did not bear the character of a dogmatic decree, and a distinction was to be drawn between a decree of the Pope and its acceptance by the Church through a Council. - Luther's [illegible]

How then, Luther proceeded to inquire, should the Christian obtain forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, righteousness before God, peace and holiness in God? And in answering this question he reverted to the key-note of his doctrine of salvation, which he had begun to preach before the contest about indulgences commenced. He had already declared that salvation came through faith; in other words, through heartfelt trust in God's mercy, as announced by the Bible, and in the Saviour Christ. How was that consistent with the acts of ecclesiastical penance, such as absolution in particular, which must be obtained from the priest? Luther now declared that God would assuredly allow his offer of forgiveness to be conveyed to those who longed for it, by His commissioned servant of the Church, the priest, but that the assurance of such forgiveness must lean simply on the promise of God, by virtue and on behalf of Whom the priest performed his office. And at the same time he declared that this promise could be conveyed to a troubled Christian by any brother-Christian, and that full forgiveness would be granted to him if he had faith. No enumeration of particular sins was necessary for that end; it was enough if the repentant and faithful yearning for the word of mercy was made known to the priest or brother from whom the message of comfort was sought. Hence it followed, on the one hand, that priestly absolution and the sacrament availed nothing to the receiver unless he turned with inward faith to his God and Saviour, received with faith the word spoken to him, and through that word let himself be raised to greater faith. It followed also, on the other hand, that a penitent and faithful Christian, holding fast to that word, to whom the priest should arbitrarily refuse the absolution he looked for, could, in spite of such refusal, participate in God's forgiveness to the full. Herewith was broken at once the most powerful bond by which the dominant Church enslaved the souls to the organs of her hierarchy. Luther has humbled man to the lowest before God, through Whose grace alone the sinner, in meek and believing trustfulness, can be saved. But in God and through this grace he teaches him to be free and certain of salvation. Christ, he says, has not willed that man's salvation should lie in the hand or at the pleasure of a man.

As for the outward acts and punishments which the Church and the Pope imposed, he did not seek to abolish them. In this external province at least he recognised in the Pope a power originating direct from God. Here, in his opinion, the Christian was bound to put up with even an abuse of power and the infliction of unjust punishment.

The whole contest turned ultimately on the question as to who should determine disputes about the truth, and where to seek the highest standard and the purest source of Christian verity. Gradually at first, and manifestly with many inward struggles on the part of Luther, his views and principles gained clearness and consistency. Even within the Catholic Church the doctrine as to the highest authority to be recognised in questions of belief and conduct was by no means so firmly established as is frequently represented by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope, and of the absolute authority attaching thereby to his decisions, however confidently asserted by the admirers of Aquinas and accepted by the Popes, was not erected into a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church until 1870. The other theory, that even the Pope can err, and that the supreme decision rests with a General Council, had been maintained by theologians whom, at the same time, no Pope had ever ventured to treat as heretics. It was on the ground of this latter theory that the University of Paris, then the first university in Europe, had just appealed from the Pope to a General Council. In Germany opinions were on the whole divided between this and the theory of Papal absolutism. Again, the view that neither the decisions of a Council nor of a Pope were *ipso facto* infallible, but that an appeal therefrom lay to a council possibly better informed, had already been advanced with impunity by writers of the fifteenth century. The only point as to which no doubt was expressed, was that the decisions of previous General Councils, acknowledged also by the Pope, contained absolutely pure Divine truth, and that the Christian Universal Church could never fall into error; but even then, with reference to this Church, the question still remained as to who or what was her true and final representative.

Luther now followed what he found to be the teaching of the Bible, so far as that teaching presented itself to his own independent and conscientious research, and as, traced home in the New Testament and especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, it shaped itself to his perception. But for all this, he would not yet abandon his agreement with the Church of which he was a member. The very man whom Eck had branded as full of 'Bohemian poison,' complained of the Bohemian Brethren or Moravians for exalting themselves in their ignorance above the rest of Christendom. A Thomist indeed, who to him was only a Scholastic among others, he fearlessly opposed; but still we find no expression of a thought that the Church, assembled at a General Council, had ever erred, nor even that any future Council could pronounce an erroneous decision upon the present points in dispute. Nay, he awaits the decision of such a Council against the charges of heresy already brought against him, though without ever admitting his readiness, if such a Council should assemble, to submit beforehand and unconditionally to its decision, whatever it might be. Above and before any such decision he held firm to the authority of his own conviction: his conscience, he said, would not allow him to yield from that resolve; he was not standing alone in this contest, but with him stood the truth, together with all those who shared his doubts as to the virtue of indulgences.

Still, while rejecting the doctrine of the infallibility of the Popes, it was a hard matter for Luther to reproach them also with actual error in their decisions. We have seen how necessity forced him to do so in the case of Clement VI. Towards the existing Head of the Church he desired to remain, as far as possible, in concord and subjection. It was not for mere appearance' sake, that in his ninety-five theses he represented his own view of indulgences as being also that of the Pope. He hoped, at all events, and wished with all his heart that it was so; and later on, towards the close of his life, he tells us how confidently he had cherished the expectation that the Pope would be his patron in the war against the shameless vendors of indulgences. Even after those hopes had failed, he spoke of Leo X. with respect as a man of good disposition and an educated theologian, whose only misfortune was that he lived in an atmosphere of corruption and in a vicious age. He was none the less assured of his Divine credentials as the supreme earthly Shepherd of Christendom, and the depositary of all canonical power. The duty of humility and obedience, impressed on him to excess as a monk, must, no less than the fear of the possible dangers and troubles in store for himself and his Christian brethren, have made Luther shrink from the thought of having actually to testify and fight against him. He ventured to dedicate his 'Solutions' to the Pope himself. The letter of May 30, 1518, in which he did this, shows the peculiar, anomalous, and untenable position in which he now found himself placed. He is horrified, he says, at the charges of heresy and schism brought against himself. He who would much prefer to live in peace, had no wish to set up any dogmas in his theses, provoked as they were by a public scandal, but simply in Christian zeal, or, as others might have it, in youthful ardour, to invite men to a disputation, and his present desire was to publish his explanation of them under the patronage and protection of the Pope himself. But at the same time he declares that his conscience was innocent and untroubled, and he adds with emphatic brevity, 'Retract I cannot.' He concludes by humbly casting himself at the Pope's feet with the words, 'Give me life or death, accept or reject me as you please.' He will recognise the Papal voice as that of the Lord Jesus Himself. He will, if worthy of death, not flinch from it. But that declaration of his, which he could not retract, must stand.

CHAPTER III.

LUTHER AT AUGSBURG BEFORE CAIETAN. APPEAL TO A COUNCIL.

The task that Luther had now undertaken lay heavy upon his soul. He was sincerely anxious, whilst fighting for the truth, to remain at peace with his Church, and to serve her by the struggle. Pope Leo, on the contrary, as was consistent with his whole character, treated the matter at first very lightly, and when it threatened to become dangerous, thought only how, by means of his Papal power, to make the restless German monk harmless.

Two expressions of his in these early days of the contest are recorded. 'Brother Martin,' he said, 'is a man of a very fine genius, and this outbreak the mere squabble of envious monks;' and again, 'It is a drunken German who has written the theses; he will think differently about them when sober.' Three months after the theses had appeared, he ordered the Vicar-General of the Augustinians to 'quiet down the man,' hoping still to extinguish easily the flame. The next step was to institute a tribunal for heretics at Rome, for Luther's trial: what its judgment would be was patent from the fact that the single theologian of learning among the judges was Sylvester Prierias. Before this tribunal Luther was cited on August 7; within sixty days he was to appear there at Rome. Friend and foe could well feel certain that they would look in vain for his return.

Papal influence, meanwhile, had been brought to bear on the Elector Frederick, to induce him not to take the part of Luther, and the chief agent chosen for working on the

Elector and the Emperor Maximilian was the Papal legate, Cardinal Thomas Vio of Gaëta, called Caietan, who had made his appearance in Germany. The University of Wittenberg, on the other hand, interposed on behalf of their member, whose theology was popular there, and whose biblical lectures attracted crowds of enthusiastic hearers. He had just been joined at Wittenberg by his fellow-professor Philip Melancthon, then only twenty-one years old, but already in the first rank of Greek scholars, and the bond of friendship was now formed which lasted through their lives. The university claimed that Luther should at least be tried in Germany.

Luther expressed the same wish through Spalatin to his sovereign. He now also answered publicly the attack of Prierias upon his theses, and declared not only that a Council alone could represent the Church, but that even a decree of Council might err, and that an Act of the Church was no final evidence of the truth of a doctrine. Being threatened with excommunication, he preached a sermon on the subject, and showed how a Christian, even if under the ban of the Church, or excluded from *outward* communion with her, could still remain in true *inward* communion with Christ and His believers, and might then see in his excommunication the noblest merit of his own.

The Pope, meanwhile, had passed from his previous state of haughty complacency to one of violent haste. Already, on August 23, thus long before the sixty days had expired, he demanded the Elector to deliver up this 'child of the devil,' who boasted of his protection, to the legate, to bring away with him. This is clearly shown by two private briefs from the Pope, of August 23 and 25, the one addressed to the legate, the other to the head of all the Augustinian convents in Saxony, as distinguished from the Vicar of those congregations, Staupitz, who already was looked on with suspicion at Rome. These briefs instructed both men to hasten the arrest of the heretic; his adherents were to be secured with him, and every place where he was tolerated laid under the interdict. So unheard of seemed this conduct of the Pope, that Protestant historians would not believe in the genuineness of the briefs; but we shall soon see how Caietan himself refers to the one in his possession.

Other and general relations, interests, and movements of the ecclesiastical and political life of the German nation now began to exercise an influence, direct or indirect, upon the history of Luther and the development of the struggles of the Reformation, and even caused the Pope himself to moderate his conduct.

Whilst questions of the deepest kind about the means of salvation, and the grounds and rules of Christian truth, had been opened up for the first time by Luther during the contest about indulgences, the abuses, encroachments, and acts of tyranny committed by the Pope on the temporal domain of the Church, and closely affecting the political and social life of the people, had long been the subject of bitter complaints and vigorous remonstrances throughout Germany. These complaints and remonstrances had been raised by princes and states of the Empire, who would not be silenced by any theories or dogmas about the Divine authority and infallibility of the Pope, nor crushed by any mere sentence of excommunication. And in raising them they had made no question of the Divine right of the Papacy. Was it not natural that, in the indignation excited by their wrongs, they should turn to the man who had laid the axe to the root of the tree which bore such fruit, and at least consider the possibility of profiting by his work? Luther, on his part, showed at first a singularly small acquaintance with the circumstances of their complaints, and seemed hardly aware of the loud protests raised so long on this subject at the Diets. But with the question of indulgences the field of his experience broadened in this respect. The care he evinced in this matter for the care of souls and true Christian morality made him the ally of all those who were alarmed at the vast export of money to Rome, about which he had already said in his theses that the Christian sheep were being regularly fleeced.

In another respect, also, the ecclesiastical policy of the Papal see was closely interwoven with the political condition and history of Germany. If in theory the Pope claimed to control and confirm the decrees even of the civil power, in practice he at least attempted to assert and maintain an omnipresent influence. And with regard to Germany it was all-important to him that the Empire should not become so powerful as to endanger his authority in general and his territorial sovereignty in Italy. However loftily the Popes in their briefs proclaimed their immutable rights, derived from God, and their plenary power, and took care to let theologians and jurists advance such pretensions, they understood clearly enough in their practical conduct to adjust those relations to the rules of political or diplomatic necessity.

In the summer of 1518 a Diet was held at Augsburg, at which the Papal legate attended. The Pope was anxious to obtain its consent to the imposition of a heavy tax throughout the Empire, to be applied ostensibly for the war against the Turks, but alleged to be wanted in reality for entirely other objects. The Emperor Maximilian, now old and hastening to his end, was endeavouring to secure the succession of his grandson Charles, and Caietan's chief task was to exert his influence with Maximilian and the Elector Frederick to bring Luther into their disfavour. The Archbishop Albert, who had been hit so hard by Luther's attack on the traffic in indulgences, was solemnly proclaimed Cardinal by order of the Pope.

Of Maximilian it might fairly have been expected that, after his many experiences and contests with the Popes, he would at least protect Luther from the worst, however unlikely it might be that he should entertain the idea of effecting, by his help, a great reform in the National Church. He did indeed express his wish to Pfeffinger, a counsellor of the Elector, that his prince should take care of the monk, as his services might some day be wanted. But he supported the Pope in the matter of the tax, and hoped to gain him for his own political ends. He opposed Luther also in his attack on indulgences, on the ground that it endangered the Church, and that he was resolved to uphold the action taken by the Pope.

This demand for a tax, however, was received with the utmost disfavour both by the Diet and the Empire; and a long-cherished bitterness of feeling now found expression. An anonymous pamphlet was circulated, from the pen of one Fischer, a prebendary of Würzburg, which bluntly declared that the avaricious lords of Rome only wished to cheat the 'drunken Germans,' and that the real Turks were to be looked for in Italy. This pamphlet reached Wittenberg and fell into the hands of Luther, whom now for the first time we hear denouncing 'Roman cunning,' though he only charged the Pope himself with allowing his grasping Florentine relations to deceive him. The Diet seized the opportunity offered by this demand for a tax, to bring up a whole list of old grievances; the large sums drawn from German benefices by the Pope under the name of annates, or extorted under other pretexts; the illegal usurpation of ecclesiastical patronage in Germany, the constant infringement of concordats, and so on. The demand itself was refused, and in addition to this, an address was presented to the Diet from the bishop and clergy of Liége, inveighing against the lying, thieving, avaricious conduct of the Romish minions, in such sharp and violent tones that Luther, on reading it afterwards when printed, thought it only a hoax, and not really an episcopal remonstrance.

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This was reason enough why Caietan, to avoid increasing the excitement, should not attempt to lay hands on the Wittenberg opponent of indulgences. The Elector

Frederick, from whose hands Caietan would have to demand Luther, was one of the most powerful and personally respected princes of the Empire, and his influence was especially important in view of the election of a new Emperor. This prince went now in person to Caietan on Luther's behalf, and Caietan promised him, at the very time that the brief was on its way to him from Rome, that he would hear Luther at Augsburg, treat him with fatherly kindness, and let him depart in safety.

Luther accordingly was sent to Augsburg. It was an anxious time for himself and his friends when he had to leave for that distant place, where the Elector, with all his care, could not employ any physical means for his protection, and to stand accused as a heretic before that Papal legate who, from his own theological principles, was bound to condemn him, Caietan being a zealous Thomist like Prierias, and already notorious as a champion of indulgences and Papal absolutism. 'My thoughts on the way,' said Luther afterwards, 'were now I must die; and I often lamented the disgrace I should be to my dear parents.'

He went thither in humble garb and manner. He made his way on foot till within a short distance of Augsburg, when illness and weakness overcame him, and he was forced to proceed by carriage. Another younger monk of Wittenberg accompanied him, his pupil Leonard Baier. At Nüremberg he was joined by his friend Link, who held an appointment there as preacher. From him he borrowed a monk's frock, his own being too bad for Augsburg. He arrived here on October 7.

The surroundings he now entered, and the proceedings impending over him, were wholly novel and unaccustomed. But he met with men who received him with kindness and consideration; several of them were gentlemen of Augsburg favourable to him, especially the respected patrician, Dr. Conrad Peutinger, and two counsellors of the Elector. They advised him to behave with prudence, and to observe carefully all the necessary forms, to which as yet he was a stranger.

Luther at once announced his arrival to Caietan, who was anxious to receive him without delay. His friends, however, kept him back until they had obtained a written safe-conduct from the Emperor, who was then hunting in the environs. In the meantime, a distinguished friend of Caietan, one Urbanus of Serralonga, tried to persuade him, in a flippant, and, as Luther thought, a downright Italian manner, to come forward and simply pronounce six letters,—*Revoco*—I retract. Urbanus asked him with a smile if he thought his sovereign would risk his country for his sake. 'God forbid!' answered Luther. 'Where then do you mean to take refuge?' he went on to ask him. 'Under Heaven,' was Luther's reply.

To Melancthon Luther wrote as follows: 'There is no news here, except that the town is full of talk about me, and everybody wants to see the man who, like a second Herostratus, has kindled such a flame. Remain a man as you are, and instruct the youth aright. I go to be sacrificed for them and for you, if God so will. For I will rather die, and, what is the hardest fate, lose for ever the sweet intercourse with you, than revoke anything that it was right for me to say.'

On October 11 Luther received the letter of safe-conduct, and the next day he appeared before Caietan. Humbly, as he had been advised, he prostrated himself before the representative of the Pope, who received him graciously and bade him rise.

The Cardinal addressed him civilly, and with a courtesy Luther was not accustomed to meet with from his opponents; but he immediately demanded him, in the name and by command of the Pope, to retract his errors, and promise in future to abstain from them and from everything that might disturb the peace of the Church. He pointed out, in particular, two errors in his theses; namely, that the Church's treasure of indulgences did not consist of the merits of Christ, and that faith on the part of the recipient was necessary for the efficacy of the sacrament. With respect to the second point, the religious principles upon which Luther based his doctrine were altogether strange and unintelligible to the Scholastic standpoint of Caietan; mere tittering and laughter followed Luther's observations, and he was required to retract this thesis unconditionally. The first point settled the question of Papal authority. On this, the Cardinal-legate took his chief stand on the express declaration of Pope Clement: he could not believe that Luther would venture to resist a Papal bull, and thought he had probably not read it. He read him a vigorous lecture of his own on the paramount authority of the Pope over Council, Church, and Scripture. As to any argument, however, about the theses to be retracted, Caietan refused from the first to engage in it, and undoubtedly he went further in that direction than he originally desired or intended. His sole wish was, as he said, to give fatherly correction, and with fatherly friendliness to arrange the matter. But in reality, says Luther, it was a blunt, naked, unyielding display of power. Luther could only beg from him further time for consideration.

Luther's friends at Augsburg, and Staupitz, who had just arrived there, now attempted to divert the course of these proceedings, to collect other decisions of importance bearing on the subject, and to give him the opportunity of a public vindication. Accompanied therefore by several jurists friendly to his cause, and by a notary and Staupitz, he laid before the legate next day a short and formal statement of defence. He could not retract unless convicted of error, and to all that he had said he must hold as being Catholic truth. Nevertheless he was only human, and therefore fallible, and he was willing to submit to a legitimate decision of the Church. He offered, at the same time, publicly to justify his theses, and he was ready to hear the judgment of the learned doctors of Basle, Freiburg, Louvain, and even Paris upon them. Caietan with a smile dismissed Luther and his proposals, but consented to receive a more detailed reply in writing to the principal points discussed on the previous day.

On the morrow, October 14, Luther brought his reply to the legate. But in this document also he insisted clearly and resolutely from the commencement on those very principles which his opponents regarded as destructive of all ecclesiastical authority and of the foundations of Christian belief. He spoke with crucial emphasis of the trouble he had taken to interpret the words of Pope Clement in a Scriptural sense. The Papal decrees might err, and be at variance with Holy Writ. Even the Apostle Peter himself had once to be reproved (Galat. ii. 11 sqq.) for 'walking not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel;' surely then his successor was not infallible. Every faithful believer in Christ was superior to the Pope, if he could show better proofs and grounds of his belief. Still he entreated Caietan to intercede with Leo X., that the latter might not harshly thrust out into darkness his soul, which was seeking for the light. But he repeated that he could do nothing against his conscience: one must obey God rather than man, and he had the fullest confidence that he had Scripture on his side. Caietan, to whom he delivered this reply in person, once more tried to persuade him. They fell into a lively and vehement argument; but Caietan cut it short with the exclamation 'Revoke.' In the event of Luther not revoking or submitting to judgment at Rome, he threatened him and all his friends with excommunication, and whatever place he might go to with an interdict; he had a mandate from the Pope to that effect already in his hands. He then dismissed him with the words, 'Revoke, or do not come again into my presence.'

Nevertheless he spoke in quite a friendly manner after this to Staupitz, urging him to try his best to convert

Luther, whom he wished well. Luther, however, wrote the same day to his friend Spalatin, who was with the Elector, and to his friends at Wittenberg, telling them that he had refused to yield. The legate, he said, had behaved with all friendliness of manner to Staupitz in his affair, but neither Staupitz nor himself trusted the Italian when out of sight. If Caietan should use force against him, he would publish the written reply he gave him. Caietan might call himself a Thomist, but he was a muddle-headed, ignorant theologian and Christian, and as clumsy in giving judgment in the matter as a donkey with a harp. Luther added further that an appeal would be drawn up for him in the form best fitted to the occasion. He further hinted to his Wittenberg friends at the possibility of his having to go elsewhere in exile; indeed, his friends already thought of taking him to Paris, where the university still rejected the doctrine of Papal absolutism. He concluded this letter by saying that he refused to become a heretic by denying that which had made him a Christian; sooner than do that, he would be burned, exiled, or cursed.

The appeal of which Luther here spoke, was 'from the Pope ill-informed to the same when better informed.' On October 16 he submitted it, formally prepared, to a public notary. While Staupitz and Link, warned to consult their personal safety, and despairing of any good result, left Augsburg, Luther still remained there. He even addressed on October 17 a letter to Caietan, conceding to him the utmost he thought possible. Moved, as he said, by the persuasions of his dear father Staupitz and his brother Link, he offered to let the whole question of indulgences rest, if only that which drove him to this tragedy were put a stop to; he confessed also to having been too violent and disrespectful in dispute. In after years he said to his friends, when referring to this concession, that God had never allowed him to sink deeper than when he had yielded so much. The next day, however, he gave notice of his appeal to the legate, and told him he did not wish longer to waste his time in Augsburg. To this letter he received no answer.

Luther waited, however, till the 20th. He and his Augsburg patrons began to suspect whether measures had not already been taken to detain him. They therefore had a small gate in the city wall opened in the night, and sent with him an escort well acquainted with the road. Thus he hastened away, as he himself described it, on a hard-trotting hack, in a simple monk's frock, with only knee-breeches, without boots or spurs, and unarmed. On the first day he rode eight miles, as far as the little town of Monheim. As he entered in the evening an inn and dismounted in the stable, he was unable to stand from fatigue, and fell down instantly among the straw. He travelled thus on horseback to Wittenberg, where he arrived well and joyful, on the anniversary of his ninety-five theses. He had heard on the way of the Pope's brief to Caietan, but he refused to think it could be genuine. His appeal, meanwhile, was delivered to the Cardinal at Augsburg, who had it posted by his notary on the doors of the cathedral.

From Augsburg Luther was followed by a letter from Caietan to the Elector, full of bitter complaints against him. He had formed, he said, the highest hopes of his spiritual recovery, and had been grievously disappointed in him; the Elector, for his own honour and conscience' sake, must now either send him to Rome or, at least, expel him from his territory, since measures of fatherly kindness had failed to make him acknowledge his error. Frederick, after waiting four weeks, returned a quiet answer, showing how the conduct of Luther quite agreed with his own view of the matter. He would have expected that no recantation would have been required of Luther till the matter in dispute had been satisfactorily examined and explained. There were a number of learned men, also, at foreign universities, from whom he could not yet have learned with certainty that Luther's doctrine was unchristian; while, to say the least, it was chiefly those whose personal and financial interests were affected by it that had become his opponents. He would propose therefore that the judgment of several universities should be obtained, and have the matter disputed at a safe place. Luther, however, to whom the Elector showed this letter, at once declared himself ready to go into exile, but would not be deterred from publishing new declarations or taking further steps.

He had a report of his conference with Caietan printed, with a justification of himself to the readers. And in this he advanced propositions against the Papacy which entirely shook its whole foundation. Already, in the solutions to his theses, he had incidentally, and without attracting further notice by the remark, spoken of a time when the Papacy had not yet acquired supremacy over the Universal Church, thereby contradicting what the Romish Church maintained and had made into a dogma, namely, that the Papal see possessed this primacy by original institution through Christ, and by means of immutable Divine right. He now expressed this opinion as a positive proposition. The Papal monarchy, he declared, was only a Divine institution in the sense in which every temporal power, advanced by the progress of historical development, might be called so also. 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.'

Without waiting for an answer direct from Rome, Luther now abandoned all thoughts of success with Leo X. On November 28 he formally and solemnly appealed from the Pope to a General Christian Council. By so doing he anticipated the sentence of excommunication which he was daily expecting. With Rome he had broken for ever, unless she were to surrender her claims and acquisitions of more than a thousand years.

After once the first restraints of awe were removed with which Luther had regarded the Papacy, behind and beyond the matter of the indulgences, and he had learned to know the Papal representative at Augsburg, and made a stand against his demands and menaces, and escaped from his dangerous clutches, he enjoyed for the first time the fearless consciousness of freedom. He took a wider survey around him, and saw plainly the deep corruption and ungodliness of the powers arrayed against him. His mind was impelled forward with more energy as his spirit for the fight was stirred within him. Even the prospect that he might have to fly, and the uncertainty whither his flight could be, did not daunt or deter him. His thought was how he could throw himself with more freedom into the struggle, if no longer hampered by any obligations to his prince and his university. Writing at that time to his friend Link, to inform him of his new publications and his appeal, he invited his opinion as to whether he was not right in saying that the Antichrist of whom St. Paul speaks (2 Thess. ii.), ruled at the Papal court. 'My pen,' he went on to say, 'is already giving birth to something much greater. I know not whence these thoughts come. The work, as far as I can see, has hardly yet begun, so little reason have the great men at Rome for hoping it is finished.' Again, while informing Spalatin, through whom the Elector always urged him to moderation, of new Papal edicts and regulations aimed against him, he declared, 'The more those Romish grandees rage and meditate the use of force, the less do I fear them. All the more free shall I become to fight against the serpents of Rome. I am prepared for all, and await the judgment of God.'

He was really prepared for exile or flight at any moment. At Wittenberg his friends were alarmed by rumours of designs on the part of the Pope against his life and liberty, and insisted on his being placed in safety. Flight to France was continually talked of; had he not followed in his appeal a precedent set by the university of Paris? We certainly cannot see how he could safely have been conveyed thither, or where, indeed, any other and safer place could have been found for him. Some urged that the Elector himself should take him into custody and keep him in a place of safety, and then write to the legate that he held him securely in confinement and was in future responsible for him. Luther proposed this to Spalatin, and added, 'I leave the decision of this matter to your discretion; I am in the hands of God and of my friends.' The Elector himself, anxious also in this respect, arranged early in December a confidential interview between Luther and Spalatin at the Castle of Lichtenberg. He also, as Luther reported to Staupitz, wished that Luther had some other place to be in, but he advised him against going away so hastily to France. His own wish and counsel, however, he refrained as yet from making known. Luther declared that at all events, if a ban of excommunication were to come from Rome, he would not remain longer at Wittenberg. On this point also the prince kept secret his resolve.

CHAPTER IV.

MILTITZ AND THE DISPUTATION AT LEIPZIG, WITH IT RESULTS.

The rumours of the dangers that threatened Luther from Rome had a good foundation. A new agent from there had now arrived in Germany, the Papal chamberlain, Charles von Miltitz.

His errand was designed to remove the chief obstacle to summoning the Wittenberg heretic to Rome, or imprisoning him there, namely, the protection afforded him by his sovereign. Miltitz was of a noble Saxon family, himself a Saxon subject by birth, and a friend of the Electoral court. He brought with him a high token of favour for the Elector. The latter had formerly expressed a wish to receive the golden rose; a symbol solemnly consecrated by the Pope himself, and bestowed by his ambassadors on princely personages to this day, for services rendered to the Church or the Papal see. The bearer of this decoration was Miltitz, and on October 24, 1518, he was furnished with a whole armful of Papal indulgences.

Above all, he took with him two letters of Leo X. to Frederick. The Elector, his beloved son, so ran the first missive, was to receive the most holy rose, anointed with the sacred chrism, sprinkled with scented musk, consecrated with the Apostolic blessing, a gift of transcendent worth and the symbol of a deep mystery, in remembrance and as a pledge of the Pope's paternal love and singular good-will, conveyed through an ambassador specially appointed by the Pope, and charged with particular greetings on that behalf &c. &c.

Such a costly gift, proffered him by the Church through her Pontiff, was intended to manifest her joy at the redemption of mankind by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and the rose was an appropriate symbol of the quickening and refreshing body of our Redeemer. These high-sounding and long-winded expressions showed very plainly the real object of the Pope. The divine fragrance of this flower was so to permeate the inmost heart of Frederick, the 'beloved son,' that he being filled with it, might with pious mind receive and cherish in his noble breast those matters which Miltitz would explain to him, and whereof the second brief made mention; and thus the more fervently comprehend the Pope's holy and pious longing, agreeably to the hope he placed in him. The other letter, however, after referring to the call for aid against the Turks, goes on to speak of Luther. From Satan himself came this son of perdition, who was preaching notorious heresy, and that chiefly in Frederick's own land. Inasmuch as this diseased sheep must not be suffered to infect the heavenly flock, and as the honour and conscience of the Elector also must needs be stained by his presence, Miltitz was commissioned to take measures against him and his associates, and Frederick was exhorted in the name of the Lord to assist him with his authority and favour.

Papal instructions in writing to the same effect were given to Miltitz for Spalatin, as Frederick's private secretary, and for Degenhard Pfeffinger, a counsellor of the Elector. To Spalatin in particular, the most trusted adviser of Frederick in religious matters, it was represented, how horrible was the heretical audacity of this 'son of Satan,' and how he imperilled the good name of the Elector. In like manner the chief magistrate of Wittenberg was required by letter to give assistance to Miltitz, and enable him to execute freely and unhindered the Pope's commands against the heretic Luther, who came of the devil. Miltitz took with him similar injunctions for a number of other towns in Germany, to ensure safe passage for himself and his prisoner to Rome, in the event of his arresting Luther. He was armed, it was said, with no less than seventy letters of this kind.

As regards the rose, Miltitz had strict orders to make the actual delivery of it to Frederick depend wholly on his compliance with Caietan's advice and will. It was deposited first of all in the mercantile house of the Fuggers at Augsburg. This public precaution was taken, to prevent Miltitz from parting with the precious gift in haste or from too anxious a desire for the thanks and praise in prospect, before there were reasonable grounds for hoping that it had served its purpose.

Towards the middle of December a Papal bull, issued on November 9, was published by Caietan in Germany, which finally laid down the doctrine of indulgences in the sense directly combated by Luther, and, although not mentioning him by name, threatened excommunication against all who shared the errors which had lately been promulgated in certain quarters.

So utterly did the Pope appear to have set his face against all reconciliation or compromise. And yet, as the event showed, room was left for Miltitz in his secret instructions to try another method, according as circumstances might dictate.

Miltitz, after having crossed the Alps, sought an interview first with Caietan in Southern Germany, and, as the latter had gone to the Emperor in Austria, he paid a visit to his old friend Pfeffinger, at his home in Bavaria. Continuing his journey with him, he arrived on December 25 at the town of Gera, and from there announced his arrival to Spalatin, who was at Altenburg. On the way he had had constant opportunities of noticing, both among learned men and the common people, signs of sympathy for the man against whom his mission was directed, and a feeling hostile to Rome, of which those at Rome neither knew nor cared to know. He was a young and clever man, full of the enjoyment of life, who knew how to mix and converse with people of every kind, and even to touch now and then on the situation and doings at Rome which were exciting such lively indignation. Tetzel also, whom Miltitz summoned to meet him, wrote complaining that the people in Germany were so excited against him by Luther, that his life would not be safe on the road. Miltitz accordingly, with his usual readiness, resolved speedily on an attempt to make Luther harmless by other means. After paying his visit to the Elector at Altenburg, he agreed to treat with him there in a friendly manner.

The remarkable interview with Luther took place at Spalatin's house at Altenburg in the first week of the new year. Miltitz feigned the utmost frankness and friendliness, nay, even cordiality. He himself declared to Luther, that for the last hundred years no business had caused so much trouble at Rome as this one, and that they would gladly there give ten thousand ducats to prevent its going further. He described the state of popular feeling as he had found it on his journey; three were for Luther where only one was for the Pope. He would not venture, even with an escort of 25,000 men, to carry off Luther through Germany to Rome. 'Oh, Martin!' he exclaimed, 'I thought you were some old theologian, who had carried on his disputations with himself, in his warm corner behind the stove. Now I see how young, and fresh, and vigorous you are.' Whilst plying him with exhortations and reproaches about the injury he did to the Romish Church, he accompanied them with tears. He fancied by this means to make him his confidant and conformable to his schemes.

Altenburg

Luther, however, soon showed him that he could be his match in cleverness. He refrained, he tells us, from letting Miltitz see that he was aware what crocodile's tears they were. Indeed he was quite prepared, as he had been before under the menaces of a Papal ambassador, so now under his persuasions and entreaties, to yield all that his conscience allowed, but nothing beyond, and then quietly to let matters take their own course.

In the event of Miltitz withdrawing his demand for a retractation, Luther agreed to write a letter to the Pope, acknowledging that he had been too hasty and severe, and promising to publish a declaration to German Christendom urging and admonishing reverence to the Romish Church. His cause, and the charges brought against him, might be tried before a German bishop, but he reserved to himself the right, in case the judgment should be unacceptable, of reviving his appeal to the Church in Council. Personally he desired to desist from further strife, but silence must also be imposed on his adversaries.

Having come to this point of agreement, they partook of a friendly supper together, and on parting Miltitz bestowed on him a kiss.

In a report given of this conference to the Elector, Luther expressed the hope that the matter by mutual silence might 'bleed itself to death,' but added his fear that, if the contest were prolonged, the question would grow larger and become serious.

He now wrote his promised address to the people. He bated not an inch from his standpoint, so that, even if he should for the future let the controversy rest, he might not appear to have retracted anything. He allowed a value to indulgences, but only as a recompense for the 'satisfaction' given by the sinner, and adding that it was better to do good than to purchase indulgences. He urged the duty of holding fast in Christian love and unity, and notwithstanding her faults and sins, to the Romish Church, in which St. Peter and St. Paul and hundreds of martyrs had shed their blood, and of submitting to her authority, though with reference only to external matters. Propositions going beyond what was here conceded he wished to be regarded as in no way affecting the people or the common man. They should be left, he said, to the schools of theology, and learned men might fight the matter out between them. His opponents indeed, if they had admitted what Luther declared in this address, would have had to abandon their main principles, for to them the doctrine that indulgences and Church authority meant far more than was here stated was a truth indispensable for salvation.

Luther wrote his letter to the Pope on March 3, 1519. It began with expressions of the deepest personal humility, but differed significantly in the quiet firmness of its tone from his other letter of the previous year to Leo X. Quietly, but as resolutely, he repudiated all idea of retracting his principles. They had already, through the opposition raised by his enemies, been propagated far and wide, beyond all his expectations, and had sunk into the hearts of the Germans, whose knowledge and judgment were now more matured. If he let himself be forced to retract them he would give occasion to accusation and revilement against the Romish Church; for the sake of her own honour he must refuse to do so. As for his battle against indulgences, his only thought had been to prevent the Mother Church from being defiled by foreign avarice, and that the people should not be led astray, but learn to se love before indulgences.

Meanwhile, on January 12, Maximilian had died. He was the last national Emperor with whom Germany was blessed; in character a true German, endowed with rich gifts both mental and physical, a man of high courage and a warm heart, thoroughly understanding how to deal with high and low, and to win their esteem and love. By Luther too we hear him often spoken of afterwards in terms of affectionate remembrance: he tells us of his kindness and courtesy to everyone, of his efforts to attract around him trusty and capable servants from all ranks, of his apt remarks, of his tact in jest and in earnest; further of the troubles he had in his government of the Empire and with his princes, of the insolence he had to put up with from the Italians, and of the humour with which he speaks of himself and his imperial rule. 'God,' said he on one occasion, 'has well ordered the temporal and spiritual government; the former is ruled over by a chamois-hunter, and the latter by a drunken priest' (Pope Julius). He called himself a king of kings, because his German princes only acted like kings

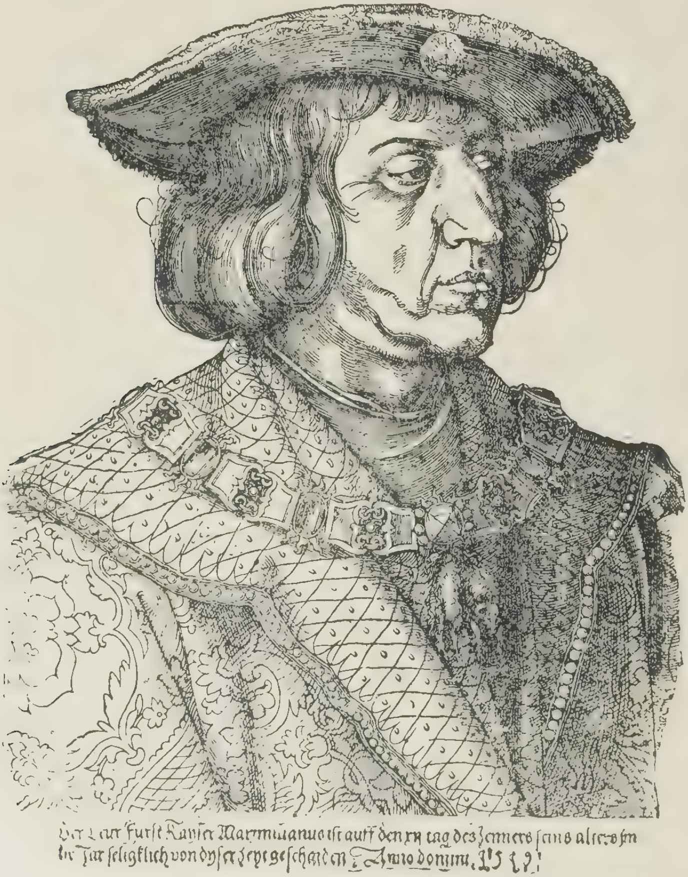

Der Teur Furſt Kayſer Maximilianus iſt auff den xii tag des Jenners ſeins alters im
lx Jar ſeligklich von dyſer zeyt geſchaiden. Anno domini. 1519.

FIG. 13. THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN. (From his Portrait by Albert Dürer.)

when it suited them. With the lofty ideas and projects which he cherished as sovereign, he stood before the people as a worthy representative of Imperialism, even though his eyes may have been fixed in reality more on his own family and the power of his dynasty, than on the general interests of the Empire. The ecclesiastical grievances of the German nation, which we heard of at the Diet of 1518, had long engaged his lively sympathy, though he deemed it wiser to abstain from interfering. He had an opinion on these matters and on the necessary reforms drawn up by the Humanist Wimpheling. Nay, he had once, in his contest with Pope Julius, worked to bring about a general reforming Council. The question forces itself on the mind—however vain such an inquiry may be from a historical point of view—what turn Luther's great work, and the fortunes of the German nation and Church would have taken, if Maximilian had identified his own imperial projects with the interests for which Luther contended, and thus had come forward as the leader of a great national movement. As it was, Maximilian died without ever having realised more of the importance of this monk than was shown by his remark about him, already noticed, at Augsburg.

His death served to increase the respect which the Pope found it necessary to show to the Elector Frederick. For, pending the election of a new Emperor, the latter was Administrator of the Empire for Northern Germany, and the issue of the election depended largely on his influence. On June 28 Maximilian's grandson, King Charles of Spain, then nineteen years of age, was chosen Emperor. He was a stranger to German life and customs, as the German people and the Reformer must constantly have had to feel. For the Pope, however, these considerations were of further import, for in his dealings with the new Emperor he had to proceed at least with caution, since the latter was aware that he had done his best to prevent his election. On the other hand, Charles was under an obligation to the Elector, being mainly indebted to him for his crown, and unable to come himself immediately to Germany to accept his rule.

Miltitz meanwhile had further prosecuted his scheme, without revealing his own ultimate object. He chose for a judge of Luther's cause the Archbishop of Treves, and persuaded him to accept the office. Early in May he had an interview with Caietan at Coblentz, the chief town of the archiepiscopal diocese, and now summoned Luther to appear there before the Archbishop.

But Miltitz took good care to say nothing about the opinions entertained at Rome of his negotiations with Luther. Would Luther venture from his refuge at Wittenberg without the consent of his faithful sovereign, who himself evinced suspicion in the matter, and set forth in the dark, so to speak, on his long journey to the two ambassadors of the Pope? He would be held a fool, he wrote to Miltitz, if he did; moreover, he did not know where to find the money for the journey. What took place between Rome and Miltitz in this affair was altogether unknown to Luther, as it is to us.

Whilst this attempt at a mediation – if such it could be called – remained thus in abeyance, a serious occasion of strife had been prepared, which caused the seemingly muffled storm to break out with all its violence.

Luther's colleague, Carlstadt, who at first, on the appearance of Luther's theses, had viewed them with anxiety, but who afterwards espoused the new Wittenberg theology, and pressed forward in that path, had had a literary feud since 1518 with Eck, on account of his attacks upon Luther. The latter, meeting Eck at Augsburg in October, arranged with him for a public disputation in which Eck and Carlstadt could fight the matter out. Luther hoped, as he told Eck and his friends, that there might be a worthy battle for the truth, and the world should then see that theologians could not only dispute but come to an agreement. Thus then, at least between him and

Eck, there seemed the prospect of a friendly understanding. The university of Leipzig was chosen as the scene of the disputation. Duke George of Saxony, the local ruler, gave his consent, and rejected the protest of the theological faculty, to whom the affair seemed very critical.

When, however, towards the end of the year, Eck published the theses which he intended to defend, Luther found with astonishment that they dealt with cardinal points of doctrine, which he himself, rather than Carlstadt, had maintained, and that Carlstadt was expressly designated the 'champion of Luther.' Only one of these theses related to a doctrine specially defended by Carlstadt, namely, that of the subjection of the will in sinful man. Among the other points noticed was the denial of the primacy of the Romish Church during the first few centuries after Christ. Eck had extracted this from Luther's recent publications; so far as Carlstadt was concerned, he could not have read or heard a word of such a statement.

Luther fired up. In a public letter addressed to Carlstadt he observed that Eck had let loose against him, in reality, the frogs or flies intended for Carlstadt, and he challenged Eck himself. He would not reproach him for having so maliciously, uncourteously, and in an untheological manner charged Carlstadt with doctrines to which he was a stranger; he would not complain of being drawn himself again into the contest by a piece of base flattery on Eck's part towards the Pope; he would merely show that his crafty wiles were well understood, and he wished to exhort him in a friendly spirit, for the future, if only for his own reputation, to be a little more sensible in his stratagems. Eck might then gird his sword upon his thigh, and add a Saxon triumph to the others of which he boasted, and so at length rest on his laurels. Let him bring forth to the world what he was in labour of; let him disgorge what had long been lying heavy on his stomach, and bring his vainglorious menaces at length to an end.

Luther was anxious, indeed, apart from this special reason, to be allowed to defend in a public disputation the truth for which he was called a heretic; he had made this proposal in vain to the legate at Augsburg. He now demanded to be admitted to the lists at Leipzig. He wished in particular, to take up the contest, openly and decisively, about the Papal primacy.

His friends just on this point grew anxious about him. But he prepared his weapons with great diligence, studying thoroughly the ecclesiastical law-books and the history of ecclesiastical law, with which until now he had never occupied himself so much. Herein he found his own conclusions fully confirmed. Nay, he found that the tyrannical pretensions of the Pope, even if more than a thousand years old, derived their sole and ultimate authority from the Papal decretals of the last four centuries. Arrayed against the theory of that primacy were the history of the previous centuries, the authority of the Council of Nice in 325, and the express declaration of Scripture. This he stated now in a thesis, and announced his opinion in print.

We have already noticed the high importance of this historical evidence in regard to matters of belief, as well as to the entire conception of Christian salvation, and of the true community or Church of Christ. The real essence of the Church is shown not to depend on its constitution under a Pope. And the course of history, wherein God allowed the Christians of the West to come under the external authority of the Pope, just as people come to be under the rule of different princes, in no way subjected, or should subject, the whole of Christendom to his dominion. The millions of Eastern Christians, who are not his subjects, and who are therefore condemned by the Pope as schismatics, are all, as Luther now distinctly declares, none the less members of Christendom, of the Church, of the Body of Christ. Participation in salvation does not exist only in the community of the Church of Rome. For

Christendom collectively, or the Universal Church, there is no other Head but Christ. Luther now also discovered and declared that the bishops did not receive their posts over individual dioceses and flocks until after the Apostolic period; the episcopate therefore ceases to be an essential and necessary element of the Church system. What, then, is really essential for the continuance of the Church, and how far does it extend? Luther answers this question with the fundamental principle of Evangelical Protestantism. The Church, he says, is not at Rome only, but there, and there only, where the Word of God is preached and believed in; where Christian faith, hope, and charity are alive, where Christ, inwardly received, stands before a united Christendom as her bridegroom. This Universal Church, says Luther, is the one intended by the Creed, when it says 'I believe in a Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints.'

The mere external power which the Popedom exercised in its government of the Church, in the imposition of outward acts and penalties—appeared, so far, to Luther a matter of indifference in respect to religion and the salvation of souls. But it was another and more serious matter with regard to the claim to Divine right asserted for that power by the Papacy, and to its extension over the soul and conscience, over the community of the faithful, nay, over the fate of departed souls. Here Luther saw an invasion of the rights reserved by God to Himself, and a perversion of the true conditions of salvation, as established by Christ and testified in Scripture. Here he saw a human potentate and tyrant, setting himself up in the place of Christ and God. He shuddered, so he wrote to his friends, when, in reading the Papal decretals, he looked further into the doings of the Popes, with their demands and edicts, into this smithy of human laws, this fresh crucifixion of Christ, this ill-treatment and contempt of His people. As previously he had said that Antichrist ruled at the Papal court, so now, in a letter of March 13, 1519, he wrote privately to Spalatin, 'I know not whether the Pope is Antichrist himself, or one of his Apostles,' so antichristian seemed to him the institution of the Papacy itself, with its principles and its fruits. Of these decretals he says in

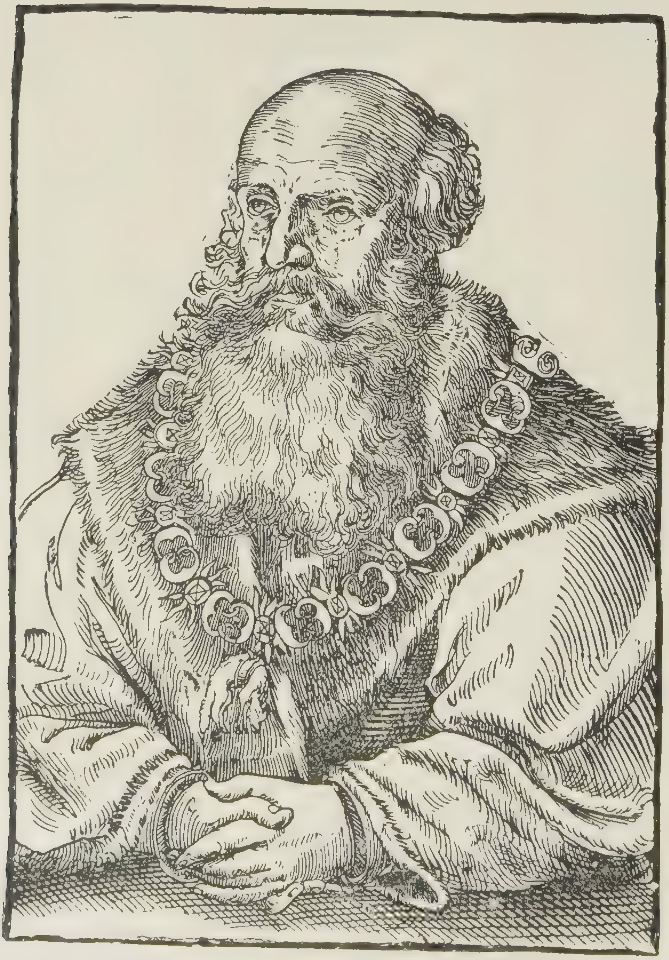


Fig. 14.—Duke George of Saxony. (From an old woodcut.)

another letter: 'If the death-blow dealt to indulgences has so damaged the see of Rome, what will it do when, by the will of God, its decretals have to breathe their last? Not that I glory in victory, trusting to my own strength, but my trust is in the mercy of God, whose wrath is against the edicts of man.'

Luther earnestly entreated Duke George to allow him to take part in the disputation. His Elector, who no doubt was personally desirous of a public, free, and learned treatment of the questions at issue, had already given him his permission. Luther's understanding with Miltitz presented no obstacle, since the silence required as a condition on the part of his opponents, had never been observed, nor indeed had ever been enjoined or recommended either by Miltitz or any other authorities of the Church. His application, nevertheless, to the Duke was referred to Eck for his concurrence, and the latter let him wait in vain for an answer. At last the Duke drew up a letter of safe-conduct for Carlstadt and all whom he might bring with him, and under this designation Luther was included. He might safely trust himself to George's word as a man and a prince.

The whole disputation was opposed and protested against from the outset by the Bishop of Merseburg, the chancellor of the university of Leipzig and the spiritual head of the faculty of theology. The project must have been inadmissible in his eyes from the mere fact that Eck's theses revived the controversy about indulgences, which was supposed to have been settled once and for ever by the Papal bull. He appealed to this pronouncement as a reason for not holding it. Inasmuch as the disputation took place, in spite of this protest, with the Duke's consent, it became an affair of all the more importance.

Duke George himself took an active interest in the matter. His was a robust, upright, and sturdy character. He was a staunch and faithful upholder of the ecclesiastical traditions in which he had grown up; it was difficult for him to extend his views. But he was honestly interested in the truth. He wished that his own men of learning might have a good scuffle in the lists for the truth's sake. On hearing of the objections of the Leipzig theologians to the disputation, his remark was, 'They are evidently afraid to be disturbed in their idleness and guzzling, and think that whenever they hear a shot fired, it has hit them.' An unusually large audience being expected for the disputation, he had the large hall of his Castle of Pleissenburg cleared and furnished for the occasion. He commissioned two of his counsellors to preside, and was anxious himself to be present. How much depended on the impression which the disputation itself, and Luther with it, should produce upon him!

On June 24 the Wittenbergers entered Leipzig, with Carlstadt at their head. An eye-witness has described the scene: 'They entered at the Grimma Gate, and their students, two hundred in number, ran beside the carriages with pikes and halberds, and thus accompanied their professors. Dr. Carlstadt drove first; after him, Dr. Martin and Philip (Melancthon) in a light basket carriage with solid wooden wheels (Rollwagen); none of the wagons were either curtained or covered. Just as they had passed the town-gate and had reached the churchyard of St. Paul, Dr. Carlstadt's carriage broke down, and the doctor fell out into the dirt; but Dr. Martin and his *fidus Achates* Philip, drove on.' Meanwhile, an episcopal mandate, forbidding the disputation on pain of excommunication, had been nailed up on the church doors, but no heed was paid to it. The magistrate even imprisoned the man who posted the bill for having done so without his permission.

Before commencing the disputation, certain preliminary conditions were arranged. The proceedings were to be taken down by notaries. Eck had opposed this, fearing to be hindered in the free use of his tongue, and not liking to have all his utterances in debate so exactly defined. The protocols, however, were to be submitted to umpires charged to decide the result of the disputation, and were to be published after their verdict was announced. In vain had both Luther and Carlstadt, who refused to bind themselves to this decision, opposed this stipulation. The Duke, however, insisted on it, as a means of terminating judicially the contest.

Early on the morning of June 27 the disputation was opened with all the worldly and spiritual solemnity that could be given to a most important academical event. First came an address of welcome in the hall, spoken by the Leipzig professor, Simon Pistoris; then a mass in the church of St. Thomas, whither the assembly repaired in a procession of state; then a still grander procession to the Pleissenburg, where a division of armed citizens was stationed as a guard of honour; then a long speech on the right way of disputing, delivered in the Castle hall by the famous Peter Schade Mosellanus, a professor at Leipzig and a master of Latin eloquence; and lastly the chanting three times of the Latin hymn, 'Come, Holy Ghost,' the whole assembly kneeling. At two o'clock the disputation between Eck and Carlstadt began. They were placed opposite each other in pulpits.

A host of theologians and learned laymen had flocked together to the scene. From Wittenberg had come the Pomeranian Duke Barnim, then Rector of the University. Prince George of Anhalt, then a young Leipzig student, and afterwards a friend of Luther, was there. Duke George of Saxony frequently attended the proceedings, and listened attentively. His court jester is said to have appeared with him, and a comic scene is mentioned as having occurred between him and Eck, to the great diversion of the meeting. Frederick the Wise was represented by one of his counsellors, Hans von Planitz.

Eck and Carlstadt contended for four days, from June 27 to July 3, on the question of free will and its relations to the operation of the grace of God. It was a wearisome contest, with disconnected texts from Scripture and passages from old teachers of the Church, but without any of the lively and free animation of moral and religious spirit, which, in Luther's treatment of such questions, carried his hearers with him. In power of memory, as in readiness of speech, Eck proved himself superior to his opponent. On Carlstadt bringing books of reference with him, he got this disallowed, and had now the advantage that no one could check his own quotations. Thus, confident of triumph, he proceeded to his contest with Luther.

Luther meanwhile, on June 29, the day of St. Peter and St. Paul, had preached a sermon at the request of Duke Barnim at the Castle of Pleissenburg, wherein, referring to the Gospel of the day, he treated, in a simple, practical, and edifying manner, of the main point of the disputation between Eck and Carlstadt, and at the same time of the point he himself was about to argue, namely, the meaning of the power of the keys granted to St. Peter. In opposition to him, Eck delivered four sermons in various churches of the town (none of which Luther would have been allowed to preach in), and speaking of them afterwards he said, 'I simply stirred up the people to be disgusted with the Lutheran errors.' The members of the Leipzig university kept peevishly aloof from their brethren of Wittenberg throughout the disputation, while paying all possible homage to Eck. When Luther one day entered a church, the monks who were conducting service hastily took away the monstrance and the elements, to avoid having them defiled by his presence. And yet he was afterwards reproached for neglecting to go to church at Leipzig. In the hostelries where the Wittenberg students lodged, such violent scenes occurred between them and their Leipzig brethren, that halberdiers had to be stationed at the tables to keep order.

Duke George invited the heretic, together with Eck and Carlstadt, to his own table, and to a private audience as well. So frank and genial was he, and so intent on making himself acquainted with Luther and his cause. Luther spoke of him then as a good, pious prince, who knew how to speak in princely fashion. The Duke, however, told him at that audience, that the Bohemians entertained great expectations of him; and yet George, who on his mother's side was grand-son to Podiebrad, King of Bohemia, was anxious to have all taint of the hateful Bohemian heresy most carefully avoided. On this point Luther remarked to him that he knew well how to distinguish between the pipe and the piper, and was only sorry to see how accessible princes might be to the influence of foreign agitations. Leipzig altogether must have been a strange and uncomfortable atmosphere for Luther.

On Monday, July 4, he entered the lists with Eck. On the morning of that day he signed the conditions, which had been arranged in spite of his protest; but he stated that, against the verdict of the judges, whatever it might be, he maintained the right of appeal to a Council, and would not accept the Papal curia as his judge. The protocol on this point ran as follows: 'Nevertheless Dr. Martin has stipulated for his appeal, which he has already announced, and so far as the same is lawful, will in no wise abandon his claim thereto. He has stipulated further that, for reasons touching himself, the report of this disputation shall not be submitted for approval to the Papal court.'

The appearance of Luther at this disputation has given occasion for the first description of his person which we possess from the pen of a contemporary. Mosellanus, already mentioned, says of him in a letter: 'He is of middle stature, his body thin, and so wasted by care and study, that nearly all his bones may be counted. He is in the prime of life. His voice is clear and melodious. His learning and his knowledge of Scripture are extraordinary; he has nearly everything at his fingers' ends. Greek and Hebrew he understands sufficiently well to give his judgment

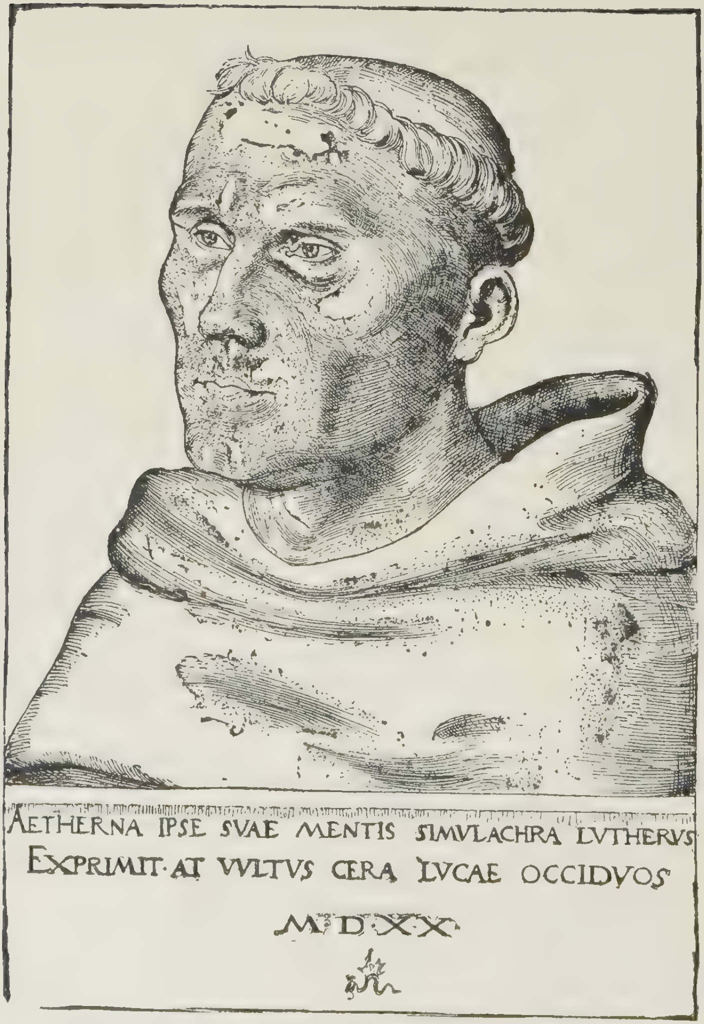

AETHERNA IPSE SVAE MENTIS SIMVLACHRA LVTHERVS
EXPRIMIT·AT VVLTVS CERA LVCAE OCCIDVOS
M·D·X·X·

Fig. 15.—Luther. (From an engraving of Cranach, in 1520.)

on the interpretation of the Scriptures. In speaking, he has a vast store of subjects and words at his command; he is moreover refined and sociable in his life and manners; he has no rough Stoicism or pride about him, and he understands how to adapt himself to different persons and times. In society he is lively and witty. He is always fresh, cheerful, and at his ease, and has a pleasant countenance, however hard his enemies may threaten him, so that one cannot but believe that Heaven is with him in his great undertaking. Most people however reproach him with wanting moderation in polemics, and with being more cutting than befits a theologian and one who propounds something new in sacred matters.' His ability as a disputant was afterwards acknowledged by Eck, who in referring to this tourney, quoted Aristotle's remark that when two men dispute together, each of whom has learned the art, there is sure to be a good disputation.

Eck is described by Mosellanus as a man of a tall, square figure, with a voice fit for a public crier, but more coarse than distinct, and with nothing pleasant about it; with the mouth, the eyes, and the whole appearance of a butcher or soldier, but with a most remarkable memory. In power of memory and elocution he surpassed even Luther; but in solidity and real breadth of learning, impartial men like Pistoris gave the palm to Luther. Eck is said to have imitated the Italians in his great animation of speech, his declamation, and gesticulations with his arms and his whole body. Melancthon even said in a letter after the disputation, 'Most of us must admire Eck for his manifold and distinguished intellectual gifts.' Later on he calls him, 'Eckeckeck, the daws'-voice.' At any rate Eck displayed a rare power and endurance in those Leipzig days, and understood above all how to pursue with cleverness the real object he had in view in his contest with Luther.

The two began at once with that point which Eck had singled out as the chief object of debate, and about which

Luther had advanced his boldest proposition, namely, the question of the Papal power.

After lengthy discussions on the evidence of texts of Scripture; on the old Fathers of the Church, to whom the Papal supremacy was unknown; on the Western Church of middle ages, by whom that supremacy was acknowledged at an earlier period than Luther would admit; on the non-subjection to Rome of Eastern Christendom, to whom Luther referred, and whom Eck with a light heart put outside the pale of salvation, Eck on the second day of the disputation

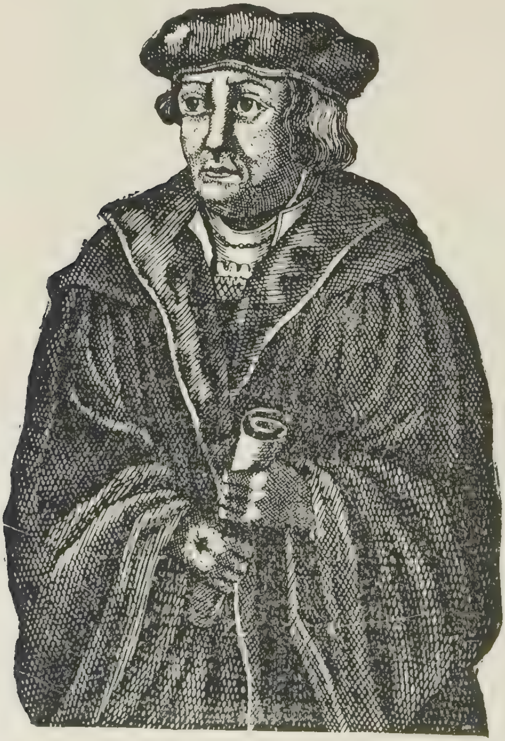


Fig. 16.—Dr. John Eck. (From an old woodcut.)

passed, after due premeditation, from the ecclesiastical authorities he had quoted in favour of the Divine right of the Papal primacy, to the statements of the English heretic Wicliffe, and the Bohemian Huss, who had denied this right, and had therefore been justly condemned. He was bound to notice them, he said, since, in his own frail and humble judgment, Luther's thesis favoured in the highest degree the errors of the Bohemians, who, it was reported, wished him well for his opinions. Luther answered him as he had done in each case before. He condemned the separation of the Bohemians from the Catholic Church, on the ground that the highest right derived from God was that of love and the Spirit, and he repudiated the reproach which Eck sought to cast upon him. But he declared at the same time that the Bohemians on that point had never yet been refuted. And with perfect self-conviction and calm reflection he proceeded to assert that among the articles of Huss some were fundamentally Christian and Evangelical, such as, for example, his statements that there was only one Universal Church (to which even Greek Christendom had always and still belonged), and that the belief in the supremacy of the Church of Rome was not necessary to salvation. No man, he added, durst impose upon a Christian an article of belief which was antiscriptural; the judgment of an individual Christian must be worth more than that of the Pope or even of a Council, provided he has a better ground for it.

That moment, when Luther spoke thus of the doctrines of Huss, a heretic already condemned by a Council and proscribed in Germany, was the most impressive and important in the whole disputation. An eye-witness, who sat below Duke George and Barnim, relates that the Duke, on hearing the words, shouted out in a voice heard by all the assembly, 'A plague upon it!' and shook his head, and put both hands to his sides. The whole audience, variously as they thought of the assertion, must have been fairly astounded. Luther, it was true, had already stated in writing that a Council could err. But now he declared himself for principles which a Council, namely that of Constance, solemnly appointed and unanimously recognised by the whole of Western Christendom, had condemned, and thus openly accused that Council of error in a decision of the most momentous importance. Nay more, that decision had been concurred in by the very men who, while recognising the Papal primacy, strenuously defended against Papal despotism the rights of General Councils, and of the nations and states which they represented. The Western Catholic Church entertained, as we have seen, a diversity of views as to the relative authority of the Popedom, as an institution of Christ, and that which appertained to Councils. Luther now, by denying the Divine institution and authority of the Papacy, seemed to have broken with all authority whatsoever existing in the Church, and with every possible exercise of the same.

Opinion
of Councils

Luther himself does not appear to have considered at the moment this extent of his acknowledgment of the 'Christian' character of some of Huss's articles, nor to have adequately reflected on the attitude of direct opposition in which it placed him to the Council of Constance. When Eck declared it 'horrible' that the 'reverend father' had not shrunk from contradicting that holy Council, assembled by consent of all Christendom, Luther interrupted him with the words, 'It is not true that I have spoken against the Council of Constance.' He then went on to draw the inference that the authority of the Council, if it erred in respect of those articles, was consequently fallible altogether.

Some days later, and after further consideration, Luther produced four propositions of Huss, which were perfectly Christian, although they had been formally rejected by the Council. He sought means, nevertheless, to preserve for the Council its dignity. As for these rejected articles, he said, it had declared only some to be heretical, and others to be simply mistaken, and the latter, at all events, must not be counted as heresies—nay, he took the liberty of supposing that the former were interpolations in the text of the Council's resolutions. He would grant, further, that the decisions of a Council in matters of faith must at all times be accepted. And in order to guard himself against any misunderstanding and misconstruction, he once broke off from the Latin, in which the whole disputation had been conducted, and declared in German that he in no way desired to see allegiance renounced to the Romish Church, but that the only question in dispute was whether its supremacy rested on Divine right—that is to say, on direct Divine institution in the New Testament, or whether its origin and character were simply such as the Imperial Crown, for example, possessed in relation to the German nation. He was well aware how charges of heresy and apostasy were raised against him, and how industriously Eck had promoted them. It was only with pain and inward struggles that he stood out, Bible in hand, against the Council of Constance and such a general gathering of Western Christendom. But not a step would he go towards any recognition of the Papacy as an institution resting on Scripture. He insisted that even a Council could not compel him to do this, or make an essential article of Christian belief out of anything not found in the Bible. Again and again he declared that even a Council could err.

For five whole days they contested this main point of the disputation, without arriving at any further result.

The other subjects of discussion, relating to purgatory, indulgences, and penance, were after this of very little importance. With regard to indulgences even Eck now displayed striking moderation. The dispute on the correct conception of purgatory led to a new and important declaration by Luther as to the power of the Church in relation to Scripture. Eck quoted as Biblical proof a passage from the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament, which although not originally included in the records of the Old Covenant, had been accepted by the middle ages as of equal authority with the other Biblical writings. For the first time Luther now protested against the equal value thus assigned to them, and especially against the Church conferring upon them an authority they did not possess.

The disputation between Eck and Luther lasted till July 13. Luther concluded his argument with the words: 'I am sorry that the learned doctor only dips into Scripture as deep as the water-spider into the water—nay, that he seems to fly from it as the devil from the Cross. I prefer, with all deference to the Fathers, the authority of Scripture, which I herewith recommend to the arbiters of our cause.'

After this Carlstadt and Eck had only a short passage of arms. The disputation was to be concluded on the 15th, as Duke George wished to receive the Elector of Brandenburg on a visit to the Pleissenburg. With regard to the universities, to whom the report of the disputation was to be submitted, those agreed upon were Paris and Erfurt, but neither of the two would undertake so responsible a task.

Eck left the disputation with triumph, applauded by his friends and rewarded by Duke George with favours and honours. He followed up his fancied victory by further exciting the people against Luther, and pointing out to them in particular the sympathy between him and Huss. He wrote even to the Elector Frederick from Leipzig, proposing that he should have Luther's books burnt. The two men henceforth and for ever were mutual enemies, with no dealings together but those of heated controversy in writing. Eck's chief efforts were directed to securing Luther's formal and public condemnation.

At Leipzig Luther had been watched with the utmost suspicion. The common people had actually been told that there was something mysterious in the little silver ring he wore on his finger, very likely a small charm with the devil inside. It was even remarked on and wondered at that he carried a bunch of flowers in his hand, which he would look at and smell. From that time probably originated the saying of a devout old dame at Leipzig, as published by one of his theological opponents, the old woman having once lived at Eisleben with Luther's mother, that her son Martin was the fruit of an embrace by the devil.

For real information, however, about Luther at Leipzig, and the impression he produced by his arguments, more is to be gathered from the effect of his public appearance there during this disputation, than from a whole heap of printed matter. We allude not only to the educated laity and men of learning, but to the mass of the people who shared in the excitement caused by this controversy. A few months later we hear an opponent complain that Luther's teaching had given rise to so much squabbling, discord, and rebellion among the people, that 'there was absolutely not a town, village, or house, where men were not ready to tear each other to pieces on his account.'

Luther returned to Wittenberg full of dejection. The time at Leipzig had only been wasted; the disputation had been unworthy of the name; Eck and his friends there had cared nothing whatever about the truth. Eck, he said, had made more clamour in an hour than he or Carlstadt could have done in a couple of years, and yet all the time the question at issue was one of peaceful and abstruse theology. His disappointment, however, did not refer, as people perhaps might have imagined, to the treatment his thesis on the Papal primacy had met with, or to any embarrassment occasioned him on that account. On the contrary, while complaining of the unworthy character of the disputation, he excepted that particular thesis. He alluded rather to the superficiality and want of interest with which such important questions as justification by faith, and the sinfulness attaching even to the best works of man, were passed over or evaded. On all the points which he had wished to contend for and expound at Leipzig, he now published further explanations. And with regard to the Councils, he declared in still stronger terms than at Leipzig, that they certainly might err and had erred even in the most important matters; one had no right to identify either them or the Pope with the Church.

From this he proceeded to explain his true relations with the Bohemians. The theologian Jerome Emser, a friend of Eck, and a favourite of Duke George, contributed in his own way to this end. He had had a hot discussion with Luther before the disputation at Leipzig, in which he reproached him with causing trouble in the Church. He now prepared a remarkable public letter to a high Catholic ecclesiastic at Prague, of the name of Zack. Whilst asserting in it that the Bohemian schismatics appealed to Luther and had actually offered prayers and held services for him during the disputation, he announced, with feigned kindness to Luther, that the latter, on the contrary, had eagerly repudiated at Leipzig any fellowship with them, and had denounced their apostasy from Rome. Luther detected in all this, mere trickery and malice, and we also can only recognise in it a crafty attempt to ruin Luther's position all round. If, says Luther, he were to accept in silence the praise here meted out to him, he would seem to have retracted his whole teaching, and laid down his arms before Eck; if, on the other hand, he were to disclaim it, he would be cried down at once as a patron of the Bohemians, and charged with base ingratitude to Emser. Accordingly, in a small pamphlet, he broke out, full of wrath and bitterness, against Emser, who replied to him in a similar tone. But he represented the case with great clearness. If his doctrines had pleased the Bohemians, he would not retract them on that account. He had no desire to screen their errors, but he found on their side Christ, the Scriptures, and the sacraments of the Church, and therewith a Christian hatred of the worldliness, immorality, and arrogance of the Romish clergy. Nay, he rejoiced to think that his doctrines pleased them, and would be glad if they pleased Jews and Turks, and Emser, who was enthralled in godless error, and even Eck himself.

Letters were now already on the way to Luther from two ecclesiastics of Prague, Paduschka and Rossdalovicky, members of the Utraquist Hussite Church, which in opposition to Rome insisted on the sacramental cup being given to the laity. They assured Luther of their joyful and prayerful sympathy with him in his struggle. One of them sent him a present of knives of Bohemian workmanship, the other a writing of Huss upon the Church. Luther accepted the presents with cordiality, and sent them his own writings in return. With regard to separation from the Romish Church, the experience of Huss plainly showed him how impossible that Church made it, even to one whose heart was heavy at the thought of leaving her, to remain in her communion.

Thus the contest at Leipzig was now over, whilst in the meantime at Frankfort-on-the-Main, after the election of the new Emperor, the Elector Frederick and the Archbishop of Treves consulted together about an examination of Luther before the Archbishop, as proposed by Miltitz. Both wished to postpone it till the Diet, then about to be held. Miltitz, however, notwithstanding the result of the disputation and the further declarations of Luther, still clung to his plan of mediation. He arranged once more an interview with Luther on October 9 at Liebenwerda, when the latter renewed his promise to appear before the Archbishop, but he failed to induce the Elector to let Luther travel with him to the Archbishop. For the delivery of the golden rose, when it at last took place, he was richly rewarded with money. But the fruitlessness of his negotiations with Luther had become apparent.

CHAPTER V.

LUTHER'S FURTHER WORK, WRITINGS, AND INWARD PROGRESS, UNTIL 1520.

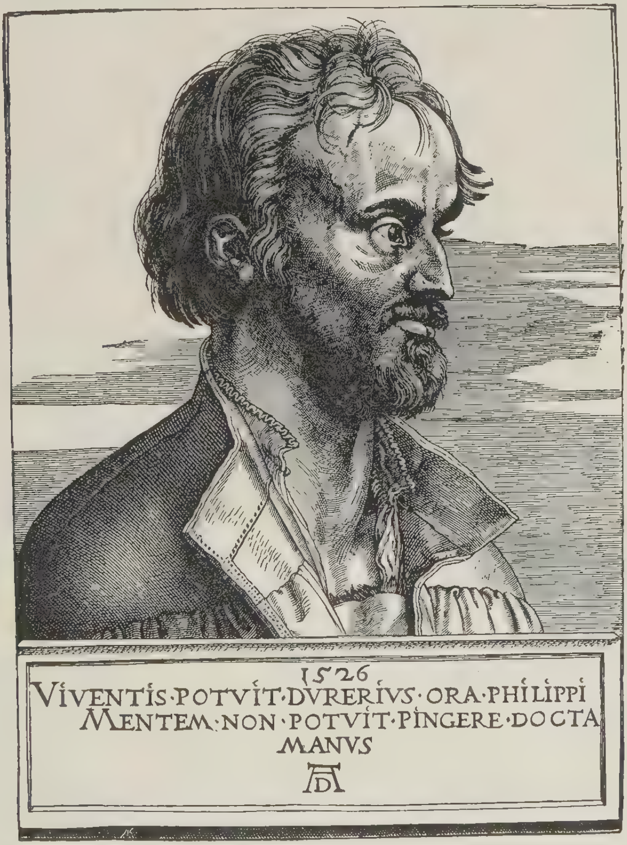
LUTHER looked upon his disputation at Leipzig as an idle waste of time. He longed to get back to his work at Wittenberg. He remained, in fact, devoted with his whole soul to his official duties there, though to the historian, of course, his work and struggles in the broader and general arena of the Church engage the most attention. He might well quarrel with the occasions that constantly called him out to it, as so many interruptions to his proper calling.

His energy there in the pulpit was as constant as his energy in the professor's chair. He glowed with zeal to unfold the one truth of salvation from its original source, the Scriptures, and to declare it and impress it on the hearts of his young pupils and his Wittenberg congregation, of educated and uneducated, of great and small. But he also wished to lay it before his students as a truth for life. With this object, he continued active with his pen, both in the Latin and the German languages. He was glad to turn to this from the questions of ecclesiastical controversy, which had formed the subject of his disputation, and of the writings referring to it. It was enough for him to show forth simply the merciful love of God and of the Saviour Christ, to point out the simple road of faith, and to destroy all trust in mere outward works, in one's own merit and virtue. Only to this extent, and because the authority pretended by the Church was opposed to this truth and this road to salvation, he was forced here also, and in face of his congregation, to wield the sword of his eloquence against that authority, and this he did with a zeal regardless of consequences. In all that he did, in his lectures as well as in his sermons, in his exposition of God's word in particular, as in his own polemics, he always threw his whole personality into the subject. We see him inwardly moved and often elated by the joyful message which he himself had learned, and had to announce to others, inspired by love to his fellow-Christians, whom he would wish to help save, and zealous even to anger for the cause of his Lord. At the same time, it cannot be denied that he was often carried away by the vehemence of his views, which saw at once in every opponent an uncompromising enemy to the truth; and that his naturally passionate temperament was often powerfully stirred, though even then his whole tone and demeanour was blended with outbursts of the noblest and the purest zeal.

In his academical lectures Luther still remained faithful to that path which he had struck out on entering the theological faculty. He wished simply to propound the revealed word of God, by explaining the books of the Old and New Testaments; though he took pains in these lectures, in which he devoted several terms to the study of a single book, to explain thoroughly and impressively the most important doctrines of Christian faith and conduct. Thus he occupied himself during the time of the contest about indulgences, and after the autumn of 1516, with the Epistle to the Galatians, wherein he found comprised clearly and briefly the fundamental truth of salvation, the doctrine of the way of faith, of God's laws of requirements and punishments, and of gospel grace. He then turned anew to the Psalms, dissatisfied with his own earlier exposition of them. His exposition of St. Paul's Epistle he had sent to the press whilst engaged in his preparations for the Leipzig disputation. His opponents, he says here, might busy themselves with their much larger affairs, with their indulgences, their Papal bulls, and the power of the Church, and so on; he would retire to smaller matters, to the Holy Scriptures and to the Apostle, who called himself not a prince of Apostles, but the least of the Apostles. He also now began the printing of his work on the Psalms.

Crowds of listeners gathered around him; his audience at times numbered upwards of four hundred. During the three years following the outbreak of the quarrel about indulgences, the number of those who matriculated annually at the university increased threefold. Luther wrote to Spalatin that the number of students increased mightily, like an overflowing river; the town could no longer contain them, many had to leave again for want of dwellings.

To this prosperity of the university Melancthon especially contributed. He had been appointed, as we have already mentioned, first professor of Greek by the Elector, and in addition to the young theologians, he attracted a number of other students to his lectures. Of still greater importance for Luther and his work, was the personal friendship and community of ideas, convictions, and aspirations which had bound the two men together in close intimacy from their first acquaintance. Their paths in life had hitherto been very different. Philip Schwarzerd, surnamed Melancthon, born in 1497 of a burgher's family of the little town of Bretten in the Palatinate, had passed a happy youth, and harmoniously and peacefully developed into manhood. He had had from early life capable teachers for his education, and was under the protection of the great philologist Reuchlin, who was a brother of his grandmother. He then showed gifts of mind wonderfully rich and early ripening. Besides the classics, he learnt mathematics, astronomy, and law. He also studied the Scriptures, grew to love them, and even when a youth had made himself familiar with their contents, without having had first to learn to know their worth by a heavy sense of inward need, by inward struggles or a long unsatisfied hunger of the soul. Thus, at seventeen he was already master of arts, and at twenty-one was appointed professor at Wittenberg. The young man, with an insignificant, delicate frame, and a shy, awkward demeanour, yet with a handsome, powerful forehead, an intellectual eye, and refined, thoughtful features, effaced at once, by his inaugural address, any doubts arising from his youthful appearance.


1526
VIVENTIS·POTVIT·DVRERIVS·ORA·PHILIPPI
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AD

FIG. 17.—MELANCTHON. (From a Portrait by Dürer.)

In this speech, however, he already declared that the chief object of classical studies was to teach theologians to draw from the original fount of Holy Scripture. He himself delivered a lecture on the New Testament immediately after one on Homer. And it was the Lutheran conception of the doctrine of salvation which he adopted in his own continued study of the Bible.

The year of his arrival at Wittenberg he celebrated Luther in a poem. He accompanied him to Leipzig. During the disputation there he is said to have assisted his friend with occasional suggestions or notes of argument, and thereby to have roused the anger of Eck. He now took the lowest theological degree of bachelor, to qualify himself for giving theological lectures on Scripture. He who from early youth had enjoyed so abundantly the treasures of Humanistic learning, and had won for himself the admiration of an Erasmus, now found in this study of Scripture a 'heavenly ambrosia' for his soul, and something much higher than all human wisdom. And already, in independent judgment on the traditional doctrines of the Church, he not only kept pace with Luther but even outwent him. It was he who attacked the dogma of transubstantiation, according to which in the mass the bread and wine of the sacrament are so changed by the consecration of the priest into the body and blood of our Lord, that nothing really remains of their original substance, but they only appear to the senses to retain it.

Luther at once recognised with joy the marvellous wealth of talent and knowledge in his new colleague, whose senior he was by fourteen years, besides being far ahead of him in theological study and experience. We have seen, during Luther's stay at Augsburg, how closely his heart clung to Melancthon and to the 'sweet intercourse' with him; we know of no other instance where Luther formed a friendship so rapidly. The more intimately he knew him, the more highly he esteemed him. When Eck spoke slightingly of him as a mere paltry grammarian, Luther exclaimed, 'I, the doctor of philosophy and theology, am not ashamed to yield the point, if this grammarian's mind thinks differently to myself; I have done so often already, and do the same daily, because of the gifts with which God has so richly filled this fragile vessel; I honour the work of my God in him.' 'Philip,' he said at another time, 'is a wonder to us all; if the Lord will, he will beat many Martins as the mightiest enemy to the devil and Scholasticism;' and again, 'This little Greek is even my master in theology.' Such were Luther's words, not uttered to particular friends of Melancthon, in order to please them, nor in public speeches or poetry, in which at that time friends showered fulsome flattery on friends, but in confidential letters to his own most intimate friends, to Spalatin, Staupitz, and others. So willing and ready was he, whilst himself on the road to the loftiest work and successes, to give precedence to this new companion whom God had given him. Luther also interested himself with Spalatin to obtain a higher salary for Melancthon, and thus keep him at Wittenberg. In common with other friends, he endeavoured to induce him to marry; for he needed a wife who would care for his health and household better than he did himself. His marriage actually took place in 1520, after he had at first resisted, in order to allow no interruption to his highest enjoyment, his learned studies.

At the university Luther was also busily engaged with the necessary preparations for many lectures that were not theological. He steadily persisted in his efforts to secure the appointment of a competent professor of Hebrew. He also worked hard to get a qualified printer, the son of the printer Lotter at Leipzig, to settle at the university, and set up there for the first time a press for three languages, German, Latin, and Greek. For everything of this kind that was submitted to the Elector, who took a constant interest in the prosperity of the university, his friend Spalatin was his confidential intermediary. As early as 1518 Luther had expressed to him the wish and hope that Wittenberg, in honour of Frederick the Wise, should, by a new arrangement of study, become the occasion and pattern for a general reform of the universities. In addition to his constant and arduous labours of various kinds, he took part also in the social intercourse of his colleagues, although he complained of the time he lost by invitations and entertainments.

In the town church at Wittenberg he continued his active duties not only on Sundays but during the week. His custom was to expound consecutively in a course of sermons the Old and New Testaments, and he explained particularly to children and those under age, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. This work alone, he once complained to Spalatin, required properly a man for it and nothing else. These services he gave to the town congregation gratuitously. The magistracy were content to recognise them by trifling presents now and then; for instance, by a gift of money on his return from Leipzig, where he had had to live on his own very scanty means. In simple, powerful, and thoroughly popular language, Luther sought to bring home to the people who filled his church, the supreme truth he had newly gained. Here in particular he employed his own peculiar German, as he employed it also in his writings.

Both he and Melancthon formed a close personal intimacy with several worthy townsmen of Wittenberg. The most prominent man among them, the painter Lucas Cranach, from Bamberg, owner of a house and estate at Wittenberg, the proprietor of an apothecary's and also of a stationer's business, besides being a member of the magistracy, and finally burgomaster, belonged to the circle of Luther's nearest friends. Luther took a genuine pleasure in Cranach's art, and the latter, in his turn, soon employed it in the service of the Reformation.

While occupied thus in delivering simple and practical sermons to his congregation in the town, he continued to publish written works of the same character and purport, in addition to his labours in the field of learned ecclesiastical controversy, thus showing the love with which he worked for them at large in this matter. These writings were little books, tracts, so-called sermons. It did not disturb him, he once said, to hear daily of certain people who despised his poverty because he only wrote little books and German sermons for the unlearned laymen. 'Would to God,' he said, 'I had all my life long and with all my power served a layman to his improvement; I should then be content to thank God, and would very willingly after that let all my little books perish. I leave it to others to judge whether writing large books and a great number of them constitutes art and is useful to Christianity; I consider rather, even if I cared to write large books after their art, I might do that quicker, with God's help, than making a little sermon in my

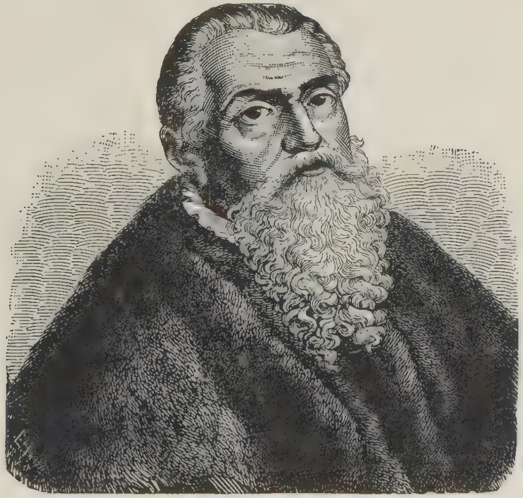

Fig. 18.—Lucas Cranach. (From a Portrait by himself.)

fashion. I have never compelled or entreated anyone to listen to me or read my sermons. I have given freely to the congregation of what God has given to me and I owe to them; whoever does not like His word, let him read and listen to others.'

In this spirit he composed, after the Leipzig disputation, a little consolatory tract for Christians, full of reflection and wisdom. He dedicated it to the Elector, an illness of whom had prompted him to write it. Even his most bigoted opponents could not withhold their approbation of the work. Luther's pupil and biographer Mathesius, thought there had never been such words of comfort written before in the German language. In a similar strain Luther wrote about preparation for dying, the contemplation of Christ's sufferings, and other matters of like kind. He explained to the people in a few pages the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. At the desire of the Elector, conveyed to him through Spalatin, and notwithstanding the difficulty he had in finding time for such a large work, he applied himself to a practical exposition of the Epistles and Gospels read in church, intended principally for the use of preachers.

At the same time he made steady progress with his own Scriptural researches, which led him away more and more from the main articles of the purely traditional doctrines of the Church. And the light which dawned upon him in these studies he took pains to impart at once to his congregation. But it was no mere negative or hypercritical interest that led him on and induced him to write. In connection with the saving efficacy of faith, which he had gathered from the Bible, new truths, full of import, unfolded themselves before him. On the other hand, such dogmas of the Church as he found to have no warrant in Scripture, nor to harmonise with the Scriptural doctrine of salvation, frequently faded from his notice, and perished even before he was fully conscious of their hollowness.

The new knowledge had ripened with him before the old husk was thrown away.

Thus he now learnt and taught others to understand anew the meaning of the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Church of the middle ages beheld with wonder in this sacrament the miracle of transubstantiation. The body of our Lord, moreover, here present as the object of adoration, was to serve above all as the bloodless repetition of the bloody sacrifice for sin on Golgotha, to be offered to God for the good of Christendom and mankind. To offer that sacrifice was the highest act which the priesthood could boast of, as being thought worthy to perform by God. This whole mysterious, sacred transaction was clothed in the mass, for the eye and ear of the members of the congregation, with a number of ritualistic forms. In giving them, moreover, the consecrated elements in the sacrament, the priest alone partook of the cup. Luther, on the contrary, found the whole meaning of that institution of the departing Saviour, according to His own words, 'Take, eat, and drink,' in the blessed and joyful communion here prepared by Him for the congregation of receivers, each one of whom was verily to partake of it in faith. Here, as he taught in a sermon on the Sacrament in 1519, they were to celebrate and enjoy real communion; communion with the Saviour, who feeds them with His flesh and blood; communion with one another, that they, eating of one bread, should become one cake, one bread, one body united in love; communion in all the benefits purchased by their Saviour and Head; and communion also in all gifts of grace bestowed upon His people, in all sufferings to be endured, and in all virtues alive in their hearts. Above all, he appealed to Christ's own words, that He had shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins. Here at His holy Supper, He wished to dispense this forgiveness, and, with it, eternal life to all His guests; He pledged it to them here by the gift of

His own body. Luther, but only incidentally, remarked in this sermon, when speaking of the cup: 'I should be well pleased to see the Church decree in a General Council, that communion in *both kinds* should be given to the laity as to the priests.' Even then he regarded as unfounded that idea of sacrifice at the mass which in his later writings he so strenuously denied and combated. At the same time he pointed out the sacrifice which Christendom, and indeed every Christian, must continually offer to God, namely, the sacrifice to God of himself and all that he possesses, offered with inward humility, prayer, and thankfulness. The question as to a change of the elements, which Melancthon had already denied, Luther passed by as an unnecessary subtlety. Lastly, together with the sacrifice supposed to be offered by the priest, he dismissed also the notion of a peculiar priesthood; for with the real sacrifice offered by Christians, as he understood it, all became priests. Instead of the difference theretofore existing between priests and laymen, he would recognise no difference among Christians but such as was conferred by the public ministration of God's word and sacrament.

Whilst discoursing in a sermon, in a similar manner, on the inner meaning of baptism, he passed from the vow of baptism to the vow of chastity, so highly prized in the Catholic Church. He admits this vow, but represents the former one as so immeasurably higher and all-embracing, as to deprive the Church of her grounds for attaching such value to the latter.

He enlarged on moral and religious life in general in a long sermon 'On Good Works,' which he dedicated early in 1520 to Duke John, the brother of the Elector. In clear and earnest language he explained how faith itself, on which everything depended, was a matter of innermost moral life and conduct, nay, the very highest work conformable to God's will; and further, how that same faith cannot possibly remain merely passive, but, on the contrary, the faithful Christian must himself become pleasing to God, on whose grace he relies, must love Him again, and fulfil His holy Will with energy and activity in all duties and relations of life. These duties he proceeds to explain according to the Ten Commandments. He will not, however, have the conscience further laden with duties imposed by the Church, for which no corresponding moral obligation exists. He turns then with earnest exhortation to rebuke certain common faults and crimes in the public life of his nation, the gluttony and drunkenness, the excessive luxury, the loose living, and the usury, which was then the subject of so much complaint. Against this last practice he preached a special sermon, in which, agreeably with the older teaching of the Church, he spoke of all interest taken for money as questionable, inasmuch as Jesus had exhorted only to lending without looking for a return. The creditor, at any rate, he said, should take his share of the risks to which his capital, in the hands of the debtor, was exposed from accident or misadventure.

The essence of the Church of Christ he placed in that inner communion of the faithful with one another and their heavenly Head, on which he dwelt with such emphasis in connection with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For the stability and prosperity of this Church he considered no externals necessary beyond the preaching of God's Word and the administration of the Sacraments, as ordained by Christ,—no Romish Popedom, nor any other hierarchical arrangements. But in the same spirit of love and brotherly fellowship with which he embraced Hussites, as well as the Eastern Christians who were denounced as Schismatics, he still wished to hold fast to the visible community of the Church of Rome, declining to identify it with the corrupt Romish Curia. That love, he said, should make him assist and sympathise with the Church, even in her infirmities and faults.

He was anxious also to fulfil personally all the minor duties incumbent on him as a monk and a priest. And yet the higher obligations of his calling, that incessant activity in proclaiming the word, both by speech and writing, were of much greater importance in his eyes. He performed with diligence such duties as the regular repetition of prayers, singing, reading the *Horæ*, and never dreamed of venturing to omit them. He relates afterwards, how wonderfully industrious he had been in this respect. Often, if he happened to neglect these duties during the week, he would make up for it in the course of the Sunday from early morning till the evening, going without his breakfast and dinner. In vain his friend Melancthon represented to him that, if the neglect were such a sin, so foolish a reparation would not atone for it.

Measures, however, were now taken by the Romish Church and its representatives, which, by attacking the word, as he preached it, drove him further into the battle.

It will be remembered that the Papal bull, directed against his theses on indulgences, had not actually mentioned him by name. Contemptuously, therefore, as the Pope had spoken of him as an execrable heretic, he had never yet uttered a formal public judgment upon him. Two theological faculties, those of the universities of Cologne and Louvain, were the first to pronounce an official condemnation of him and his writings. The latter were to be burnt, and their author compelled publicly to recant. This sentence, though pronounced after the disputation at Leipzig, related only to a small collection of earlier writings. In a published reply he dismissed, not without scorn, these learned divines, who, in a spirit of vain self-exaltation and without the smallest grounds, had presumed to pass sentence on Christian verities. Their boasting, he said, was empty wind; their condemnation frightened him no more than the curse of a drunken woman.

The first official pronouncement of a German bishop touched him more nearly. This was a decree, issued in

January 1520 by John, Bishop of Meissen, from his residence at Stolpen. Herein, Luther's one statement about the cup, which the Church, as he said, would do well to restore to the laity, was picked out of his Sermon on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The people were to be warned against the grievous errors and inconveniences which were bound to ensue from such a step; and the sermon was to be suppressed. Luther was now classed as an open ally of the Hussites, whose very ground of contention was the cup. Duke George in alarm complained of him to the Elector Frederick. It was rumoured about him even that he had been born and educated among the Bohemians.

To this episcopal note, which he ridiculed in a pun, Luther published a short and pungent reply in Latin and German. He was particularly indignant that this occasion should have been seized to tax his sermon with false doctrine, since the wish he there expressed did not contain, as even his enemies must admit, anything contrary to any dogma of the Church. For his enemies, no doubt, this one point was of more practical importance than many deviations from orthodoxy with which they might have reproached him in his doctrine of salvation; for it concerned a jealously guarded privilege of their priestly office, and was connected with the 'Bohemian heresy.' As for Huss, however, Luther now confessed without reserve the sympathy he shared with his evangelical teaching. He had learned to know him better since the Leipzig disputation. He now wrote to Spalatin: 'I have hitherto, unconsciously, taught everything that Huss taught, and so did John Staupitz, in short we are all Hussites, without knowing it. Paul and Augustine are also Hussites. I know not, for very terror, what to think as to God's fearful judgments among men, seeing that the most palpable evangelical truth known for more than a century, has been burnt and condemned, and nobody has ever ventured to say so.'

On the part of the Elector, Luther still continued to reap the benefit of that placid good-will which disregarded all attempts, either by friendly words or menaces, to set that prince against him. Luther for this thanked him publicly, without meeting with any demurrer from the Elector, as well in a dedication of the first part of his new work on the Psalms, which he had sent to the press early in 1519, as in another prefixed to his tract on Christian comfort, already noticed. This last work he had been encouraged to write by Spalatin, the confidant of the sick prince whom it was intended to please. In the dedication prefixed to the Psalms, he expressed his joy at hearing how Frederick had declared in a conversation reported by Staupitz, that all sermons, made by man's wit and uttering man's opinions, were cold and powerless, and the Scriptures alone inspired with such marvellous power and majesty that one must needs say, 'There is something more there than mere Scribe and Pharisee; there is the finger of God;' and how, when Staupitz had concurred in the remark, the prince had taken his hand and said, 'Promise me that you will always think thus.' Luther also thanked Frederick for having, as all his subjects knew, taken more care of his safety than he had done himself. In his thoughtlessness, he himself had thrown the die, and had already prepared himself for the worst, and only hoped to be able to retire into some corner, when his prince had come forward as his champion.

At the same time the Elector remained constant in his efforts to check the impetuosity of Luther. We have noticed how he encouraged him, through Spalatin, to peaceful work in the service of Christian preaching. When the episcopal missive from Stolpen threatened to make the storm break out afresh, he sent, by Spalatin, an urgent exhortation to Luther to restrain his pen, and further advised him to send letters of explanation, in a conciliatory spirit, to Albert, Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence, and the Bishop of Merseburg.

Luther wrote to both in a tone of perfect dignity.

He begged them not to lend an ear to the complaints and calumniations which were being circulated against him, especially in reference to giving the cup to the laity, and to the Papal power, until the matter had been seriously examined. He spoke at the same time of malicious accusers, who on those points held secretly the same opinions as himself.

But from this contest with the Bishop of Meissen he refused to withdraw. To Spalatin he broke out again in February 1520, in terms more decided than any he had previously given vent to, and which led people to expect still sharper utterances. 'Do not suppose,' he said, 'that the cause of Christ is to be furthered on earth in sweet peace: the Word of God can never be set forth without danger and disquiet: it is a Word of infinite majesty, it works great things, and is wonderful among the great and the high; it slew, as the prophet says (Psalm lxxviii. 31), the wealthiest of them, and smote down the chosen ones of Israel. In this matter one must either renounce peace or deny the Word; the battle is the Lord's, who has not come to bring peace into the world.' Again he says: 'If you would think rightly of the Gospel, do not believe that its cause can be advanced without tumult, trouble, and uproar. You cannot make a pen out of a sword: the Word of God is a sword; it is war, overthrow, trouble, destruction, poison; it meets the children of Ephraim, as Amos says, like a bear on the road, or like a lioness in the wood.' Of himself he adds: 'I cannot deny that I am more violent than I ought to be; they know it, and therefore should not provoke the dog. How hard it is to moderate one's heat and one's pen you can learn for yourself. That is the reason why I was always unwilling to be forced to come forward in public; and the more unwilling I am, the more I am drawn into the contest; that this happens so is due to those scandalous libels which are heaped against me and the Word of God. So shameful are they that, even if my heat and my pen did not carry me away, a very heart of stone would be moved to seize a weapon, how much more myself, who am hot and whose pen is not entirely blunt.'

The two dignitaries of the Church answered not ungraciously. They merely expressed an opinion that he was too violent, and that his writings would have a questionable influence with the mass of the people. They refrained from giving judgment on the matter; a proof that, in the Catholic Church in Germany, the questions raised by Luther could not then have been considered of such importance as the upholders of the strict Papal system maintained and desired. Even Albert, the Cardinal, Archbishop, and Primate of the German Church, ventured to speak of the whole question about the Divine or merely human right of the Papacy as an insignificant affair, which had but little to do with real Christianity, and therefore should never have become the occasion of such passionate dispute.

From Rome was now awaited the supreme judicial decision as to Luther and his cause. The Pope had already in 1518 indicated clearly enough to Frederick the Wise in what sense he intended to give this decision. But it kept on being delayed, because, on the one hand, it still appeared necessary to act with caution and consideration, and, on the other, because Roman arrogance continued to underestimate the danger of the German movement. Meanwhile Eck, by a report of his disputation and by letters had stirred the fire at Rome. The theologians of Cologne and Louvain worked in the same direction, and called on the whole Dominican Order to assist them with their influence. The Papal pretensions which Luther had disputed were now for the first time proclaimed in all their fulness of audacity and exaggeration. Luther's old opponent Prierias, in a new pamphlet, extended them to the temporal as well as the spiritual sovereignty of the world; the Pope, he said, was head of the Universe. Eck now devoted an entire treatise to justifying the Divine right of the Papal primacy.

resting his proofs boldly, and without any attempt at critical inquiry, on spurious old documents. With this book he hastened in February 1520 to Rome, in order personally to push forward and assist in publishing the bull of excommunication which was to demolish his enemy and extinguish the flame he had kindled.

But Luther's work, in proportion as it advanced and became bolder, had stirred already the minds of the people both wider and deeper. Opponents of Rome who had risen up against her in other quarters, on other grounds, and with other weapons, now ranged themselves upon his side. Among all alike the ardour of battle grew the more powerful and violent, the more it was attempted to smother them with edicts of arbitrary power.

CHAPTER VI.

ALLIANCE WITH THE HUMANISTS AND THE NOBILITY.

We have already seen how astonished Miltitz was at the sympathy with Luther which he found among all classes of the German people. The growth of this sympathy is shown in particular by the increasing number of printed editions of his writings; the perfect freedom then enjoyed by the press contributed largely to their wide circulation. In 1520 alone there were more than a hundred editions of Luther's works in German. Though the ordinary book-trade as now carried on was then unknown, there were a multitude of colporteurs actively employed in going with books from house to house, some of them merely in the interests of their trade, others also as emissaries of those who were friends of the cause, thus intended to be furthered. As reading was a difficult matter to the masses, and even to many of the higher classes, there were travelling students who went about to different places, and proffered their assistance. The earnest, deeply instructive contents of Luther's small popular tracts met the needs of both the educated and uneducated classes, in a manner never done by any other religious writings of that time, and served to stimulate their appetite for more. And to this was added the strong impression produced directly on their minds by the elementary exposition of his doctrine, irreconcilable with all notions of the Church system hitherto prevailing, and stigmatised by his enemies as poison. All, in short, that this condemned heretic wrote, became dear to the hearts of the people.

Luther found now, moreover, most valuable allies in the leading champions of that Humanistic movement, the importance of which, as regards the culture of the priesthood and the religious and ecclesiastical development of that time, we had occasion to notice during Luther's residence at the university of Erfurt. That Humanism, more than anything else, represented the general aspiration of the age to attain a higher standard of learning and culture. The alliance between Luther and the Humanists inaugurated and symbolised the union between this culture and the Evangelical Reformation.

Luther, even before entering the convent, had formed a friendship with at least some of the young 'poets,' or enthusiasts of this new learning. Later on, when, after the inward struggles and heart-searchings of those gloomy years of monastic experience, the light dawned upon him of his Scriptural doctrine of salvation, we find him expressing his sympathy and reverence for the two leading spirits of the movement, Reuchlin and Erasmus; and this notwithstanding the fact that he never approved the method of defence adopted by the supporters of the former, nor could ever conceal his dislike of the attitude taken up by Erasmus in regard to theology and religion.

Meanwhile, such Humanists as wished to enjoy the utmost possible freedom for their own learned pursuits flocked around Reuchlin against his literary enemies, and cared very little about the authorities of the Church. The bold monk and his party excited neither their interest nor their concern. Many of them thought of him, no doubt, when he was engaged in the heat of the contest about indulgences, as did Ulrich von Hutten, who wrote to a friend: 'A quarrel has broken out at Wittenberg between two hot-headed monks, who are screaming and shouting against each other. It is to be hoped that they will eat one another up.' To such men the theological questions at issue seemed not worth consideration. At the same time they took care to pay all necessary respect to the princes of the Church, who had shown favour to them personally and to their learning, and did homage to them, notwithstanding much that must have shocked them in their conduct as ecclesiastics. Thus Hutten did not scruple to enter the service of the same Archbishop Albert who had opened the great traffic in indulgences in Germany, but who was also a patron of literature and art, and was only too glad to be recognised publicly by an Erasmus. We hear nothing of any remonstrances made to him by Erasmus himself. In the same spirit that dictated the above remark of Hutten, Mosellanus, who opened with a speech the disputation at Leipzig, wrote to Erasmus during the preparations for that event. There will be a rare battle, he said, and a bloody one, coming off between two Scholastics; ten such men as Democritus would find enough to laugh over till they were tired. Moreover, Luther's fundamental conception of religion, with his doctrine of man's sinfulness and need of salvation, so far from corresponding, was in direct antagonism with that Humanistic view of life which seemed to have originated from the devotion to classical antiquity, and to revive the proud, self-satisfied, independent spirit of heathendom. Even in an Erasmus Luther had thought he perceived an inability to appreciate his new doctrine.

Melancthon's arrival at Wittenberg was, in this respect, an event of the first importance. This highly-gifted young man, who had united in his person all the learning and culture of his time, whose mind had unfolded in such beauty and richness, and whose personal urbanity had so endeared him to men of culture wherever he went, now found his true happiness in that gospel and in that path of grace which Luther had been the first to make known. And whilst offering the right hand of fellowship to Luther, he continued working with energy in his own particular sphere, kept up his intimacy with his fellow-labourers therein, and won their respect and admiration. Humanists at a distance, meanwhile, must have noticed the fact, that the most violent attacks against Luther proceeded from those very quarters, as for instance, from Hoogstraten, and afterwards from the theological faculty at Cologne, where Reuchlin had been the most bitterly persecuted. At length the actual details of the disputation between Luther and Eck opened men's eyes to the magnitude of the contest there waged for the highest interests of Christian life and true Christian knowledge, and to the greatness of the man who had ventured single-handed to wage it.

At Erfurt Luther had found already in the spring of 1518, on his return from the meeting of his Order at Heidelberg, in pleasing contrast to the displeasure he had aroused among his old teachers there, a spirit prevailing among the students of the university, which gave him hope that true theology would pass from the old to the young, just as once Christianity, rejected by the Jews, passed from them to the heathen. Those well-wishers and advisers who took his part at Augsburg, when he had to go thither to meet Caietan, were friends of Humanistic learning. Among the earliest of those, outside Wittenberg, who united that learning with the new tendency of religious teaching, we find some prominent citizens of the flourishing town of Nüremberg, where, as we have seen, Luther's old friend Link was also actively engaged. Already before the contest about indulgences broke out, the learned jurist Scheuerl of that place had made friends with Luther, whom the next year he speaks of as the most celebrated man in Germany. The most important of the Humanists there, Willibald Pirkheimer, a patrician of high esteem and an influential counsellor, and who had once held local military command, corresponded with Luther, and after learning from him the progress of his views and studies concerning the Papal power, made his Leipzig opponent the object of a bitter anonymous satire, 'The Polished Corner' (Eck). Another learned Nüremberger, the Secretary of the Senate, Lazarus

Spengler, was on terms of close Christian fellowship with Luther: he published in 1519 a 'Defence and Christian Answer,' which contained a powerful and worthy vindication of Luther's popular tracts. Albert Dürer also, the famous painter, took a deep interest in Luther's evangelical doctrine, and revered him as a man inspired by the Holy Ghost. Among the number of theologians who ranked next to Erasmus, the well-known John Oecolampadius, then a preacher at Augsburg, and almost of the same age as Luther, came forward in his support, towards the end of 1519, with a pamphlet directed against Eck. Erasmus himself in 1518, at least in a private letter to Luther's friend Lange at Erfurt, of which the latter we may be sure did not leave Luther in ignorance, declared that Luther's theses were bound to commend themselves to all good men, almost without exception; that the present Papal domination was a plague to Christendom; the only question was whether tearing open the wound would do any good, and whether it was not conceivable that the matter could be carried through without an actual rupture.

Luther, on his part, approached Reuchlin and Erasmus by letter. To the former he wrote, at the urgent entreaty of Melancthon, in December 1518, to the latter in the following March. Both letters are couched in the refined language befitting these learned men, and particularly Erasmus, and contain warm expressions of respect and deference, though in a tone of perfect dignity, and free from the hyperboles to which Erasmus was usually treated by his common admirers. At the same time Luther was careful indeed to conceal the other and less favourable side of his estimate of Erasmus, which he had already formed in his own mind and expressed to his friends. We can see how bent he was, notwithstanding, upon a closer intimacy with that distinguished man.

Reuchlin, then an old man, would have nothing to do with Luther and the questions he had raised. He even

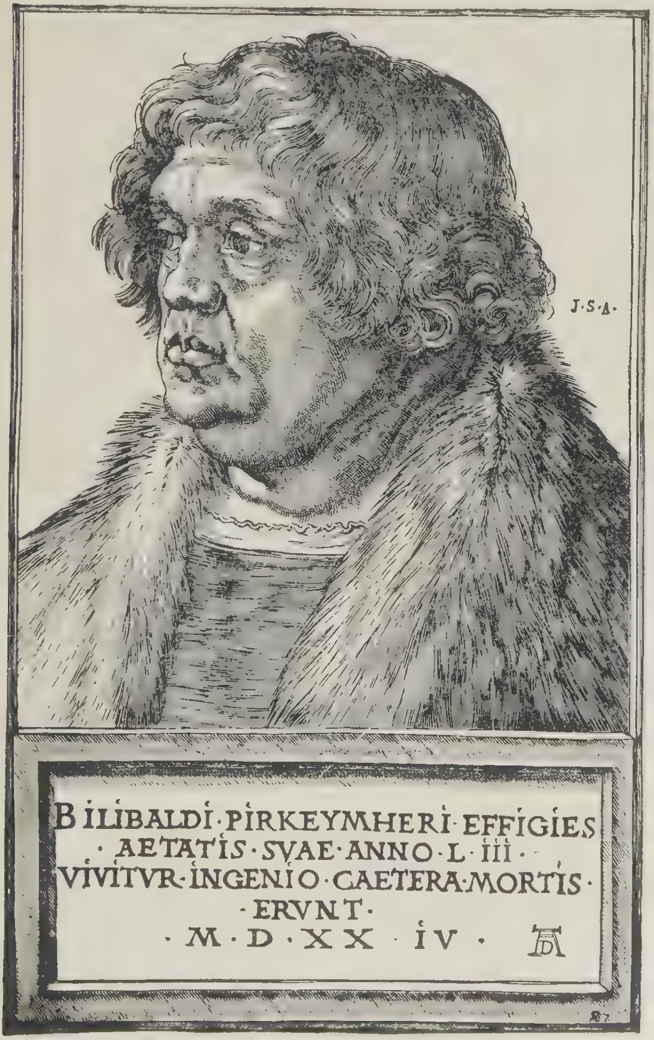
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Fig. 19.—W. Pirkheimer. (From a Portrait by Albert Dürer.)

sought to alienate his nephew Melancthon from him, by bidding him abstain from so perilous an enterprise.

Erasmus replied with characteristic evasion. He had not yet read Luther's writings, but he advised everyone to read them before crying them down to the people. He himself believed that more was to be gained by quietness and moderation than by violence, and he felt bound to warn him in the spirit of Christ against all intemperate and passionate language; but he did not wish to admonish Luther what to do, but only to continue steadfastly what he was doing already. The chief thought to which he gives expression is the earnest hope that the movement kindled by Luther's writings would not give occasion to opponents to accuse and suppress the 'noble arts and letters.' A regard for these, which indeed were the object of his own high calling, was always of paramount importance in his eyes. Not content with attacking by means of ridicule the abuses in the Church, Erasmus took a genuine interest in the improvement of its general condition, and in the elevation and refinement of moral and religious life, as well as of theological science; and the high esteem he enjoyed made him an influential man among even the superior clergy and the princes of the Church. But from the first he recognised, as he says in his letter to Lange, and possibly better than Luther himself, the difficulties and dangers of attacking the Church system on the points selected by Luther. And when Luther boldly anticipated the disturbances which the Word must cause in the world, and dwelt on Christ's saying that He had come to bring a sword, Erasmus shrank back in terror at the thought of tumult and destruction. Conformably with the whole bent of his natural disposition and character, he adhered anxiously to the peaceful course of his work and the pursuit of his intellectual pleasures. Questions involving deep principles, such as those of the Divine right of the Papacy, the absolute character of Church authority, or the freedom of Christian judgment, as founded on the Bible, he regarded from aloof; notwithstanding that silence or concealment towards either party, when once these principles were publicly put in question, was bound to be construed as a denial of the truth.

We shall see how this same standpoint, from which this learned man still retained his inward sympathy with Church matters, dictated further his attitude towards Luther and the Reformation. For the present, Luther had to thank the good opinion of Erasmus, cautiously expressed though it was, for a great advancement of his cause. It was valuable to Luther in regard to those who had no personal knowledge of him, as giving them conclusive proof that his character and conduct were irreproachable. His influence is apparent in the answer of the Archbishop Albert to Luther, in its tone of gracious reticence, and its remarks about needless contention. Erasmus had written some time before to the Archbishop, contrasting the excesses charged against Luther with those of the Papal party, and denouncing the corruptions of the Church, and particularly the lack of preachers of the gospel. Much to the annoyance of Erasmus, this letter was published, and it worked more in Luther's favour than he wished.

Those hopes which Luther had placed in the young students at Erfurt were shortly fulfilled by the so-called 'poets' beginning now to read and expound the New Testament. The theology, which, in its Scholastic and monastic form, they regarded with contempt, attracted them as knowledge of the Divine Word. Justus Jonas, Luther's junior by ten years, a friend of Eoban Hess, and one of the most talented of the circle of young 'poets,' now exchanged for theology the study of the law, which he had already begun to teach. To his respect for Erasmus was now added an enthusiastic admiration for Luther, the courageous Erfurt champion of this new evangelical doctrine. A close intimacy sprang up between Jonas and Luther, as also between Jonas and Luther's friend Lange.

Erasmus had persuaded him to take up theology; Luther, on hearing of it in 1520, congratulated him on taking refuge from the stormy sea of law in the asylum of the Scriptures.

None of the old Erfurt students, however, had cultivated Luther's friendship more zealously than Crotus, his former companion at that university; and this even from Italy, where his sympathies with Luther had been stirred by the news from Germany, and where he had learned to realise, from the evidence of his eyes, the full extent of the scandals and evils against which Luther was waging war. He, who in the 'Epistolæ Virorum Obscurorum,' had failed to exhibit in his satire the solemn earnestness which recommended itself to Luther's taste and judgment, now openly declared his concurrence with Luther's fundamental ideas of religion and theology, and his high appreciation of Scripture and of the Scriptural doctrine of salvation. He wrote repeatedly to him, reminding him of their days together at Erfurt, telling him about the 'Plague-chair' at Rome, and the intrigues carried on there by Eck, and encouraging him to persevere in his work. Expressions common to the 'poets' of his university days were curiously mingled in his letters with others of a religious kind. He would like to glorify, as a father of their fatherland, worthy of a golden statue and an annual festival, his friend Martin, who had been the first to venture to liberate the people of God, and show them the way to true piety. Not only from Italy, but also after his return, he employed his characteristic literary activity, by means of anonymous pamphlets, in the service of Luther. It was he who, towards the end of 1519, sent from Italy to Luther and Melancthon at Wittenberg, the Humanist theologian, John Hess, afterwards the reformer of the Church at Breslau. Crotus himself returned in the spring of 1520 to Germany.

Here these Humanist friends of the Lutheran movement had already been joined by Crotus' personal friend, Ulrich von Hutten, who not only could wield his pen with more vigour and acuteness than almost all his associates, but who declared himself ready to take up the sword for the cause he defended, and to call in powerful allies of his own class to the fight. He sprang from an old Franconian family, the heirs, not indeed of much wealth or property, but of an old knightly spirit of independence. Hatred of monasticism

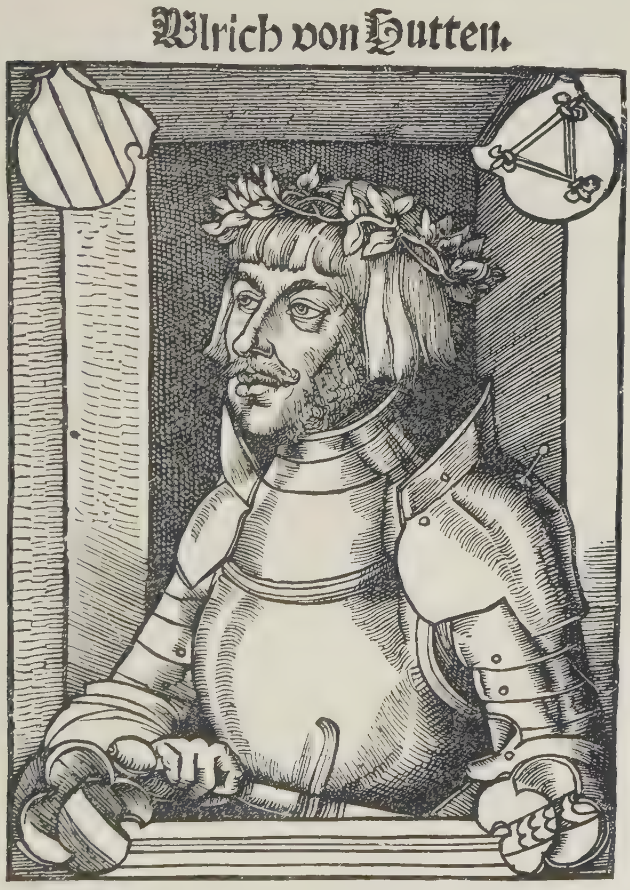

Vlrich von Hutten.

FIG. 20.—ULRICH VON HUTTEN. (From an old woodcut.)

and all that belonged to it, must have been nursed by him from youth; for having been placed, when a boy, in a convent, he ran away with the aid of Crotus, when only sixteen. Sharing the literary tastes of his friend, he learned to write with proficiency the poetical and rhetorical Latin of the Humanists of that time. In spite of all his irregularities, adventures, and unsettlement of habits, he had preserved an elastic and elevated turn of mind, desirous of serving the interests of a 'free and noble learning,' and a knightly courage, which urged him to the fight with a frankness and straightforwardness not often found among his fellow-Humanists. Whilst laughing at Luther's controversy as a petty monkish quarrel, he himself dealt a heavy blow to the traditional pretensions of the Papacy by the republication of a work by the famous Italian Humanist Laurentius Valla, long since dead, on the pretended donation of Constantine, in which the writer exposed the forgery of the edict purporting to grant the possession of Rome, Italy, and indeed the entire Western world to the Roman see. This work Hutten actually dedicated to Pope Leo himself. But what distinguished this knight and Humanist above all the others who were contending on behalf of learning and against the oppressions and usurpations of the Church and monasticism, were his thoroughly German sympathies, and his zeal for the honour and independence of his nation. He saw her enslaved in ecclesiastical bondage to the Papal see, and at the mercy of the avarice and caprice of Rome. He heard with indignation how scornfully the 'rough and simple Germans' were spoken of in Italy, how even on German soil the Roman emissaries openly paraded their arrogance, how some Germans, unworthy of the name, pandered to such scorn and contempt by a cringing servility which made them crouch before the Papal chair and sue for favour and office. He warned them to prepare for a mighty outburst of German liberty, already well-nigh strangled by Rome. At the same time he denounced the vices of his own countrymen, particularly that of drunkenness, and the proneness to luxury and usurious dealing in trade and commerce, all of which, as we have seen, had been complained of by Luther. Nor less than of the honour of Germany herself, was he jealous of the honour and power of the Empire. In all that he did he was guided, perhaps involuntarily, but in a special degree, by the principles and interests of knighthood. His order was indebted to the Empire for its chief support, although the imperial authority no less than that of his own class, had sunk in a great measure through the increasing power of the different princes. In the prosperous middle class of Germany he saw the spirit of trade prevailing to an excess, with its attendant evils. In the firmly-settled regulations of law and order, which had been established in Germany with great trouble at the end of the middle ages, he felt most out of his element: he longed rather to resort to the old method of force whenever he saw justice trampled on. And in this respect also Hutten proved true to the traditions of knighthood.

But in the material power required to give effect to his ideas of reform in the kindred spheres of politics and of the Church in her external aspect, Hutten was entirely wanting. More than this, we fail to find in him any clear and positive plans or projects of reform, nor any such calm and searching insight into the relations and problems before him as was indispensable for that object. His call, however rousing and stirring it was, died away in the distance of time and the dimness of uncertainty.

Hutten found, however, an active and powerful friend, and one versed in war and politics, in Francis von Sickingen, the 'knight of manly, noble, and courageous spirit,' as an old chronicler describes him. He was the owner of fine estates, among them the strong castles of Landstuhl near Kaiserslautern, and Ebernburg near Kreuznach, and had already, in a number of battles conducted on his own account and to redress the wrongs of others, given ample proof of his energy and skill in raising hosts of rustic soldiery, and leading them with reckless valour, in pursuit of his objects, to the fray. Hutten won him over to support the cause of Reuchlin, still entangled in a prosecution by his old accusers of heresy, Hoogstraten and the Dominicans at Cologne. A sentence of the Bishop of Spires, rejecting the charges of his opponents, and mulcting them in the costs of the suit, had been annulled, at their instance, by the Pope Against them and against the Dominican Order in particular, Sickingen now declared his open enmity, and his sympathy with the 'good old doctor Reuchlin.' In spite of delay and resistance, they were forced to pay the sum demanded. Meanwhile, no doubt under the influence of his friend Crotus, Hutten's eyes were opened about the monk Luther. During a visit in January 1520 to Sickingen at his castle of Landstuhl, he consulted with him as to the help to be given to the man now threatened with excommunication, and Sickingen offered him his protection. Hutten at the same time proceeded to launch the most violent controversial diatribes and satires against Rome; one in particular, called 'The Roman Trinity,' wherein he detailed in striking triplets the long series of Romish pretensions, trickeries, and vexatious abuses. At Easter he held a personal interview at Bamberg with Crotus, on his return from Italy.

For the furtherance of their objects and desires, in respect to the affairs of Germany and the Church these two knights placed high hopes in the new young Emperor, who had left Spain, and on the 1st of July landed on the coast of the Netherlands. Sickingen had earned merit in his election. He had hoped to find in him a truly German Emperor, in contrast to King Francis of France, who was a competitor for the imperial crown. The Pope, as we have seen, had opposed his election; his chief advocate, on the contrary, was Luther's friend, the Elector Frederick. Support was also looked for from

Charles' brother Ferdinand, as being a friend of arts and letters. Hutten even hoped to obtain a place at his court.

On this side, therefore, and from these quarters, Luther was offered a friendly hand.

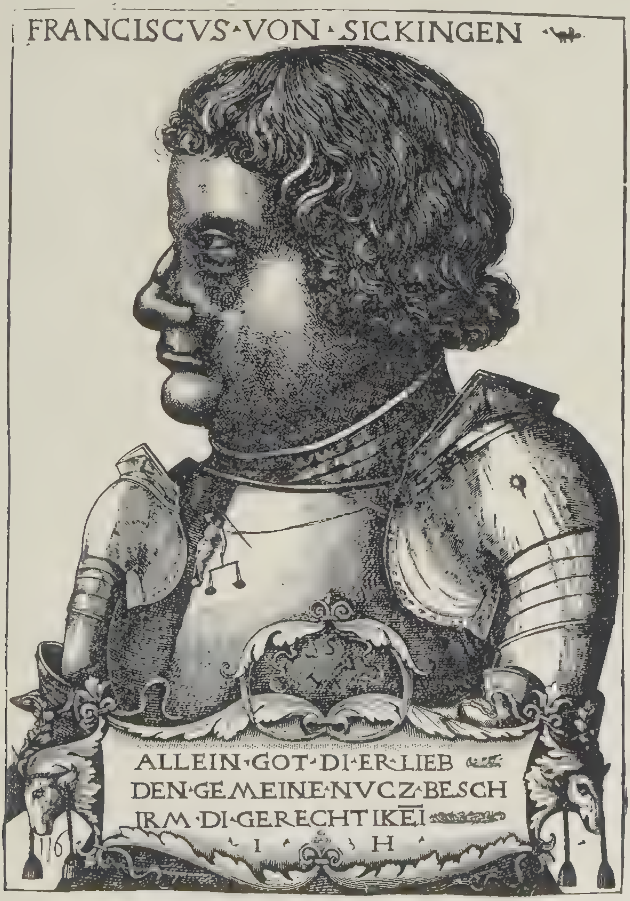


Fig. 21.—Francis von Sickingen. (From an old engraving.)

We hear Hutten first mentioned by Luther in February 1520, in connection with his edition of the work of Valla. This work, though published two years before, had been made known to Luther then, for the first time, by a friend. It had awakened his keenest interest; the falsehoods exposed in its pages confirmed him in his opinion that the Pope was the real Antichrist.

Shortly after, a letter from Hutten reached Melancthon, containing Sickingen's offer of assistance; a similar communication forwarded to him some weeks before, had never reached its destination. Sickingen had charged Hutten to write to Luther, but Hutten was cautious enough to make Melancthon the medium, in order not to let his dealings with Luther be known. Sickingen, he wrote, invited Luther, if menaced with danger, to stay with him, and was willing to do what he could for him. Hutten added that Sickingen might be able to do as much for Luther as he had done for Reuchlin; but Melancthon would see for himself what Sickingen had then written to the monks. He spoke, with an air of mystery, of negotiations of the highest importance between Sickingen and himself; he hoped it would fare badly with the Barbarians, that is, the enemies of learning,—and all those who sought to bring them under the Romish yoke. With such objects in view, he had hopes even of Ferdinand's support. Crotus, meanwhile, after his interview with Hutten at Bamberg, advised Luther not to despise the kindness of Sickingen, the great leader of the German nobility. It was rumoured that Luther, if driven from Wittenberg, would take refuge among the Bohemians. Crotus earnestly warned him against doing so. His enemies, he said, might force him to do so, knowing, as they did, how hateful the name of Bohemian was in Germany. Hutten himself wrote also to Luther, encouraging him, in pious Scriptural language, to stand firm and persevere in working with him for the liberation of their fatherland. He repeated to him the invitation of N., (he did not mention his name,) and assured him that the latter would defend him with vigour against his enemies of every kind.

Another invitation, at the same time, and of the same purport, came to Luther from the knight Silvester von Schauenburg. He too had heard that Luther was going to the Bohemians. He was willing, however, to protect him from his enemies, as were also a hundred other nobles whom with God's help he would bring with him, until his cause was decided in a right and Christian manner.

Whether Luther really entertained the thought of flying to Bohemia, we cannot determine with certainty. But we know with what seriousness, as early as the autumn of 1518, after he had refused to retract to the Papal legate, he anticipated the duty and necessity of leaving Wittenberg. How much more forcibly must the thoughts have recurred to him, when the news arrived of the impending decision at Rome, of the warning received from there by the Elector, and of the protest uttered even in Germany, and by such a prince as Duke George of Saxony, against any further toleration of his proceedings. The refuge which Luther had previously looked for at Paris was no longer to be hoped for. Since the Leipzig disputation he had advanced in his doctrines, and especially in his avowed support of Huss, far beyond what the university of Paris either liked or would endure.

Such then was Luther's position when he received these invitations. They must have stirred him as distinct messages from above. The letters in which he replied to them have not been preserved to us. We hear, however, that he wrote to Hutten, saying that he placed greater hopes in Sickingen than in any prince under heaven. Schauenburg and Sickingen, he says, had freed him from the fear of man; he would now have to withstand the rage of demons. He wished that even the Pope would note the fact that he could now find protection from all his thunderbolts, not indeed in Bohemia, but in the very heart of Germany; and that, under this protection, he could break loose against the Romanists in a very different fashion to what he could now do in his official position.

As he reviewed, in the course of the contest, the proceedings of his enemies, and was further informed of the conduct of the Papal see, the picture of corruption and utter worthlessness, nay the antichristian character of the Church system at Rome, unfolded itself more and more painfully and fully before his eyes. The richest materials for this conclusion he found in the pamphlets of the writers already referred to, and in the descriptions sent from Italy by men like Hess and others, who shared his own convictions.

All this time, moreover, Luther's feelings as a German were more and more stirred within him, while thinking of what German Christianity in particular was compelled to suffer at the hands of Rome. A lively consciousness of this had been awakened in his mind since the Diet of Augsburg in 1518, with its protest against the claims of the Papacy, its statement of the grievances of the German nation, and the vigorous writings on that subject which were circulated at that time. He referred in 1519 to that Diet, as having drawn a distinction between the Romish Church and the Romish Curia, and repudiated the latter with its demands. As for the Romanists, who made the two identical, they looked on a German as a simple fool, a lubberhead, a dolt, a barbarian, a beast, and yet they laughed at him for letting himself be fleeced and pulled by the nose. Luther's words were now re-echoed in louder tones by Hutten, whose own wish, moreover, was to incite his fellow-countrymen, as such, to rise and betake themselves to battle.

There were certain of the laity who had already brought these German grievances in Church matters before the Diets and who now gave vent in pamphlets to their denunciations of the corruption and tyranny of the Romish Church. As for Luther, he valued the judgment of a Christian layman, who had the Bible on his side, as highly, and higher, than that of a priest and prince of the Church, and ascribed the true character of a priest to all Christians alike: these Estates of the Augsburg Diet he speaks of as 'lay theologians.'

Leading laymen of the nobility now came forward and offered to assist him in his labours on behalf of the German Church. Both he and Melancthon placed their confidence also gladly in the new German Emperor.

Several letters of Luther at this time, closely following on each other, express at once the keenest enthusiasm for the contest, and the idea of a Reformation proceeding from the laity, represented, as he understood them, by their established authorities and Estates.

We find in these letters powerful effusions of holy zeal and language full of Christian instruction, mingled with the most vehement outbursts of the natural passion which was boiling in Luther's breast. Compared with them, the cleverest controversial writings of the Humanists, and even the fiercest satires of Hutten, sound only like rhetoric and elaborate displays of wit.

Luther, in his Sermon on Good Works, already noticed as so replete with wholesome doctrine and advice, had already complained that God's ministry was perverted into a means of supporting the lowest creatures of the Pope, and had declared that the best and only thing left was for kings, princes, nobles, towns, and parishes to set to work themselves, and 'make a breach in the abuse,' so that the hitherto intimidated clergy might follow. As for excommunication and threats, such things need not trouble them: they meant as little as if a mad father were to threaten his son who was guarding him.

The sharpest replies on the part of Luther were next provoked by two writings which justified and glorified the Divine authority and power of the Papacy. One was by a Franciscan friar, Augustin von Alveld; the other by Silvester Prierias, already mentioned, who was his most active opponent in this matter.

Luther broke out against 'the Alveld Ass' (as he called him in a letter to Spalatin) in a long reply entitled 'The Popedom at Rome,' with the object of exposing once and finally the secrets of Antichrist. 'From Rome' he says 'flow all evil examples of spiritual and temporal iniquity into the world, as from a sea of wickedness. Whoever mourns to see it, is called by the Romans a 'good Christian,' or in their language, a fool. It was a proverb among them that one ought to wheedle the gold out of the German simpletons as much as one could.' If the German princes and nobles did not 'make short work of them in good earnest,' Germany would either be devastated or would have to devour herself.

Prierias' pamphlet provoked him to exclaim, in that same letter to Spalatin, 'I think that at Rome they are all mad, silly, and raging, and have become mere fools, sticks and stones, hells and devils.' His remarks on this pamphlet, written in Latin, contain the strongest words that we have yet heard from his lips about the 'only means left,' and the 'short work' to be made of Rome. Emperors, kings, and princes, he says, would yet have to take up the sword against the rage and plague of the Romanists. 'When we hang thieves, and behead murderers, and burn heretics, why do not we lay hands on these Cardinals and Popes and all the rabble of the Romish Sodom, and bathe our hands in their blood?' What Luther now in reality wished to see done, was, as he goes on to say, that the Pope should be corrected as Christ commands men to deal with their offending brethren (St. Matth. xviii. 15 sqq.), and, if he neglected to hear, should be held as an heathen man and a publican.

While these pages of Luther's were in the press, towards the middle of June, Hutten, full of hope himself, and carrying with him the hopes of Luther and Melancthon, set off on his journey to the Emperor's brother in the Netherlands, and, on his way, paid a visit at Cologne to the learned Agrippa von Nettesheim, accompanied, as the latter says, by a 'few adherents of the Lutheran party.' There, as Agrippa relates with terror, they expressed aloud their thoughts. ‘What have we to do with Rome and its Bishop?’ they asked. ‘Have we no Archbishops and Bishops in Germany, that we must kiss the feet of this one? Let Germany turn, and turn she will, to her own bishops and pastors.’ Hutten paid the expenses of this journey out of money given him by the Archbishop Albert; between these two, therefore, the bonds of friendship were not yet broken. Albert was the first of the German bishops; Hutten, and very possibly the Archbishop also, might reasonably suppose that a reform proceeding from the Emperor and the Empire, might place him at the head of a German National Church.

But Luther had already put his pen to a composition which was to summon the German laity to the grand work before them, to establish the foundations of Christian belief, and to set forth in full the most crying needs and aims of the time. He had resolved to give the strongest and amplest expression in his power to the truth for which he was contending.

CHAPTER VII.

LUTHER'S WORKS TO THE CHRISTIAN NOBILITY OF THE GERMAN NATION, AND ON THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

In a dedication to his friend and colleague Amsdorf, prefixed to the first of these works, he begins, 'The time of silence is past, and the time for speaking is come.' He had several points, he tells us, concerning the improvement of the Christian condition, to lay before the Christian nobility of Germany; perhaps God would help His Church through the laity, since the clergy had become entirely careless. If charged with presumption in venturing to address such high people on such great matters, so be it, then perhaps he was guilty of a folly towards his God and the world, and might one day become court-jester. But inasmuch as he was a sworn doctor of Holy Scripture, he rejoiced in the opportunity of satisfying his oath in this manner.

He then turns to the 'Most illustrious, Most powerful Imperial Majesty, and to the Christian nobility of the German nation,' with the greeting, 'Grace and strength from God first of all, most illustrious, gracious, and beloved Lords!'

The need and troubles of Christendom, and especially of Germany, constrained him, as he said, to cry to God that He might inspire some one to stretch out his hand to the suffering nation. His hopes were in the noble young blood now given by God as her head. He would likewise do his part.

The Romanists, in order to prevent their being reformed, had shut themselves within three walls. Firstly, they said, the temporal power had no rights over them, the spiritual power, but the spiritual was above the temporal; secondly, the Scriptures, which were sought to be employed against them, could only be expounded by the Pope; thirdly, no one but the Pope could summon a Council. Against this, Luther calls to God for one of those trumpets which once blew down the walls of Jericho, in order to blow down also these walls of straw and paper.

His assault upon the first wall was decisive for the rest. He accomplished it with his doctrine of the spiritual and priestly character of all Christians, who had been baptised and consecrated by the blood of Christ (1 Peter ii. 9; Rev. v. 10). Thus, according to Luther, they are all of one character, one rank. The only thing peculiar to the so-called ecclesiastics or priests, is the special office or work of 'administering the Word of God and the Sacraments' to the congregation. The power to do this is given, indeed, by God to all Christians as priests, but, being so given, cannot be assumed by an individual without the will and command of the community. The ordination of priests, as they are called, by a bishop can in reality only signify that, out of the collective body of Christians, all possessing equal power, one is selected, and commanded to exercise this power on behalf of the rest. They hold, therefore, this peculiar office, like their fellow-members of the community who are entrusted with temporal authority, namely, to wield the sword for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the good. They hold it, as every shoemaker, smith, or builder holds office in his particular trade, and yet all alike are priests. Moreover, this temporal magisterial power has the right to exercise its office free and unhindered in its own sphere of action; no Pope or bishop must here interfere, no so-called priest must usurp it.

As a consequence of this spiritual character of Christians, the second wall was also doomed to fall. Christ said of all Christians, that they shall all be taught of God (St. John vi. 45). Thus any man, however humble, if he was a true Christian, could have a right understanding of the Scriptures; and the Pope, if wicked and not a true Christian, was not taught of God. If the Pope alone were always in the right, one would have to pray 'I believe in the Pope at Rome,' and the whole Christian Church would then be centred in one man, which would be nothing short of devilish and hellish error. After this the third wall fell by itself. For, says Luther, when the Pope acts against the Scriptures, it is our duty to stand by the Scriptures and to punish him as Christ taught us to punish offending brethren (St. Matthew xviii. 17), when He said, 'Tell it unto the Church.' Now the Church or Christendom must be gathered together in a Council. And like as the most famous of the Councils, that of Nice, and others after it, had been summoned by the Emperor, so must everyone, as a true member of the whole body, and when necessary, do what he can to make it a really free Council: 'which nobody can do so well as the temporal authorities, who meet these as fellow-Christians, fellow-priests.' Just as if a fire broke out in a city, no one, because he had not the power of the burgomaster, durst stand still and let it burn, but every citizen must run and call others together, so was it in the spiritual city of Christ, if a fire of trouble and affliction should arise. The question as to the composition of such a Council Luther does not proceed to discuss. That he wished, however, the laity to be represented, we may safely assume from the whole context, though it is doubtful how far he may then have thought of a representation of the temporal authorities as such, and, above all, of the Christian body collectively, through its political members. But the main point on which he insisted was, that the Council should be a free and really Christian one, bound by no oath to the Pope, fettered by no so-called Canon law, but subject only to the Word of God in Holy Writ.

Under twenty-six heads Luther then proceeds to enumerate the points on which such a Council should treat, and which should be urged in particular in connection with the question of reform.

The whole arrogance of the Papacy, the temporal pride with which the Pope clothed himself, the idolatry with which he was treated, were to Luther a scandal and unchristian. Lord of the universe, the Pope styled himself, and paraded about with a triple crown in all temporal splendour, and with an endless train of followers and baggage, whilst claiming to be the vicegerent of the Lord who wandered about in poverty, and gave Himself up to the Cross, and declared that His kingdom was not of this world. Clearly and fully Luther shows the various ways, embracing the whole life of the Church, in which Romish tyranny had enslaved the Churches of other countries, especially of Germany, and had turned them to account and plundered them: by means of fees and taxes of all kinds, by drawing away the trial of ecclesiastical cases to Rome, by accumulating benefices in the hands of Papal favourites of the worst description, by the unprincipled and usurious sale of dispensations, by the oath which made the bishops mere vassals of the Pope, and effectually prevented all reform. In this greed for money in particular, and in the crafty methods of collecting it, Luther saw the genuine Antichrist, who, as Daniel had foretold, was to gather the treasures of the earth (Daniel xi. 8, 39, 43).

To confront this oppression and these acts of usurpation, Luther would not have men wait for a Council. As for these impositions and taxes, he says that every prince, noble, and town should straightway repudiate and forbid them. This lawless pillaging of ecclesiastical benefices and fiefs by Rome should be resisted at once by the nobility. Anyone coming from the Papal court to Germany with such claims, must be ordered to desist, or to jump into the nearest piece of water with his seals and letters and the ban of excommunication. Luther insists especially on demanding, as Hutten had already demanded, that the individual Churches, and particularly those of Germany, should order and conduct their own affairs independently of Rome. The bishops were not to obtain their confirmation at Rome, but, as already decreed by the Nicene Council, from a couple of neighbouring bishops or an archbishop. The German bishops were to be under their own primate, who might hold a general consistory with chancellors and counsellors, to receive appeals from the whole of Germany. The Pope, in other respects, was still to be left a position of supremacy in the collective Christian Church, and the adjudication of matters of importance on which the primates could not agree. One other matter Luther dwells on, as affecting the entire constitution of the Church. It is not the mere administrative and judicial functions that constitute the true meaning of office, whether in a priest, a bishop, or a Pope, but a constant service to God's Word. Luther therefore is anxious that the Pope should not be burdened with small matters. He calls to mind how once the Apostles would not leave the Word of God, and serve tables, but wished to give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts vi. 2, 4). But he would have a clean sweep made of the so-called ecclesiastical law, contained in the law-books of the Church. The Scriptures were sufficient. Besides, the Pope himself did not keep that law, but pretended to carry all law in the shrine of his own heart.

Consistently with all that he has said about the relative positions of the temporal and spiritual powers, Luther goes on to protest, on behalf especially of the German Empire, against the 'overbearing and criminal behaviour' of the Pope, who arrogates to himself power over the Emperor, and allows the latter to kiss his foot and hold his stirrup. Granted that he is superior to the Emperor in spiritual office, in preaching, in administering the Word of grace; in other matters he is his inferior.

But the most important demand advanced by Luther, while pushing further his inquiries into the moral and social regulations and condition of the Church, is the abolition of the celibacy of the clergy. If Popes and bishops wish to impose upon themselves the burden of an unmarried life, he has nothing to say to that. He speaks only of the clergy in general, whom God has appointed, who are needed by every Christian community for the service of preaching and the sacraments, and who must live and keep house amongst their fellow-Christians. Not an angel from Heaven, much less a Pope, dare bind this man to what God has never bound him, and thereby precipitate him into danger and sin. A limit at least must be imposed on monastic life. Luther would like to see the convents and cloisters turned into Christian schools, where men might learn the Scriptures and discipline, and be trained to govern others and to preach. He would further give full liberty to quit such institutions at pleasure. He reverts to the question of clerical celibacy, in lamenting the gross immoralities of the priesthood, and complaining that marriage was so frequently avoided on account simply of the responsibilities it entailed, and the restraints it imposed on loose living.

Luther would abolish all commands to fast, on the ground that these ordinances of man are opposed to the freedom of the Bible. He would do away also with the multitude of festivals and holidays, as leading only to idleness, carousing, and gambling. He would check the foolish pilgrimages to Rome, on which so much money was wasted, whilst wife and child, and poor Christian neighbours were left at home to starve, and which drew people into so much trouble and temptation. As regards the management of the poor, Luther's requirements were somewhat stringent. All begging among Christians was to be forbidden; each town was to provide for its own poor, and not admit strange beggars. As the universities at that time, no less than the schools, were in connection with the Church, Luther offers some suggestions for their reform. He singles out the writings of the ancients which were read in the philosophical faculty, and others, which might be done away with as useless or even pernicious. With regard to the mass of civil law, he agreed with the complaint often heard among Germans, that it had become a wilderness: each state should be governed, as far as possible, 'by its own brief laws.' For children, girls as well as boys, he would like to see a school in every town. It grieved him to see how, in the very heart of Christendom, the young folk were neglected and allowed to perish for lack of timely sustenance with the bread of the gospel.

He reverts again to the question about the Bohemians, with a view to silencing at length the vile calumniations of his enemies. And in so doing he remarks of Huss, that even if he had been a heretic, 'heretics must be conquered with the pen and not with fire. If to conquer them with fire were an art, the executioners would be the most learned doctors on the earth.'

Lastly he refers briefly to the prevalent evils of worldly and social life; to wit, the luxury in dress and food, the habits of excess common among Germans, the practice of usury and taking interest. He would like to put a bridle into the mouth of the great commercial firms, especially the rich house of Fugger; for the amassing of such enormous wealth, during the life of one man, could never be done by right and godly means. It seemed to him 'far more godly to promote agriculture and lessen commerce.' Luther speaks in this as a man of the people, who were already suspicious about this accumulation of money, from a right feeling really of the moral and economical dangers thence accruing to the nation, even if ignorant of the necessary relations of supply and demand. As to this, Luther adds: 'I leave that to the worldly-wise; I, as a theologian, can only say, Abstain from all appearance of evil.' (1 Thessalonians v. 22.)

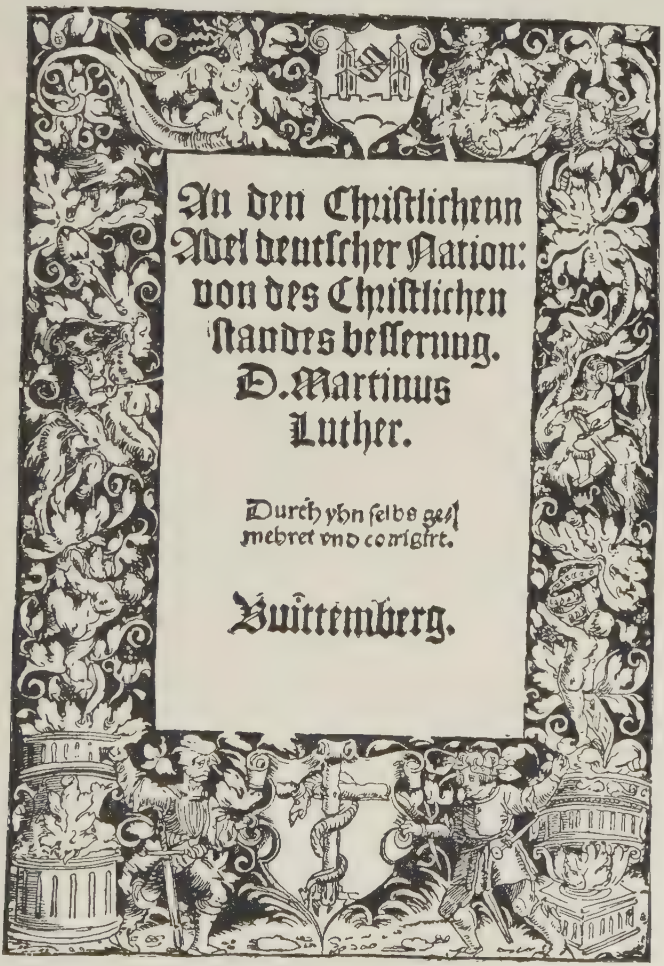
So wide a field of subjects did this little book embrace. We have only here mentioned the chief points. Luther himself acknowledges at the conclusion: 'I am well aware that I have pitched my note high, that I have proposed many things which will be looked upon as impossible, and have attacked many points too sharply. I am bound to add, that if I could, I would not only talk but act; I would rather the world were angry with me than God.' But Rome always remained the chief object of his attacks. 'Well then,' he says of her, 'I know of another little song of Rome; if her ear itches for it, I will sing it to her and pitch the notes at their highest.' He concludes, 'God give us all a Christian understanding, and to the Christian nobility of the German nation, especially, a true spiritual courage to do their best for the poor Church. Amen.'

Whilst Luther was working on this treatise, new disquieting rumours and remonstrances addressed from Rome to the Elector reached him through Spalatin. But with them came also that promise of protection from Schauenburg. Luther answered Spalatin, 'The die is cast, I despise alike the wrath and the favour of Rome; I will have no reconciliation with her, no fellowship.' Friends who heard of his new work grew alarmed; Staupitz, even at the eleventh hour, tried to dissuade him from it. But before August was far advanced, four thousand copies were already printed and published. A new edition was immediately called for. Luther now added another section repudiating the arrogant pretension of the Pope, that through his means the Roman Empire had been brought to Germany.

Well might Luther's friend Lange call this treatise a war-trumpet. The Reformer, who at first merely wished to point out and open to men the right way of salvation, and to fight for it with the sword of his word, now stepped forward boldly and with determination, demanding the abolition of all unlawful and unchristian ordinances of the Romish Church, and calling upon the temporal power to assist him, if need be, with material force. The groundwork of this resolve had been laid, as we have seen, in the progress of his moral and religious convictions; in the inalienable rights which belong to Christianity in general, and the mission with which God entrusts also the temporal power or state; in the independence granted by Him to this power on its own domain, and the duties He has imposed upon all Christian authorities, even in regard to all moral and religious needs and dangers. But he denied altogether, and we may well believe him, that he had any wish to create disorder or disturbance; his intention was merely to prepare the way for a free Council. Not indeed that he shrank from the thought of battle and tumult, should the powers whom he invoked meet with resistance from the adherents of Rome or Antichrist. As for himself, though forced to make such a stormy appearance, he had no idea of himself being destined to become the Reformer, but was content rather to prepare the way for a greater man, and his thoughts herein turned to Melancthon. Thus he wrote to Lange these remarkable words: 'It may be that I am the forerunner of Philip, and like Elias, prepare the way for him in spirit and in strength, destroying the people of Ahab' (1 Kings xviii). Melancthon, on the other hand, wrote to Lange just then about Luther, saying that he did not venture to check the spirit of Martin in this matter, to which Providence seemed to have appointed him.

From the Electoral court Luther learned that his treatise was 'not altogether displeasing.' And just at this time he had to thank his prince for a present of game.

There is no doubt that Luther received also from that quarter the advice to approach the Emperor, who had just arrived in Germany, and whom he had wished to address in his treatise, with a direct personal request for protection, to prevent his being condemned unheard. He addressed to him a well-considered letter, couched in dignified language. He issued at the same time a short public 'offer,' appealing therein to the fact, that he had so long begged in vain for a proper refutation. These two writings were first


An den Chriſtlichenn
Adel deutſcher Nation:
von des Chriſtlichen
ſtandes beſſerung.
D. Martinus
Luther.

Durch yhn ſelbs gemehret vnd corrigirt.

Wittemberg.

FIG. 22.—TITLE-PAGE OF THE SECOND EDITION OF THIS TREATISE, in a rather smaller size.

examined and corrected by Spalatin, and so appeared only at the end of August, not, as is generally supposed, in the January of this year. Luther never received an answer to his letter to the Emperor, and therefore never heard how it was received.

The dangers which threatened Luther, and through him also the honour and prosperity of his Order, affected further his companions and friends who belonged to it. And of this Miltitz took advantage to renew his attempts at mediation. He induced the brethren, at a convention of Augustinian friars held at Eisleben, to persuade Luther once more to write to the Pope, and solemnly assure him that he had never wished to attack him personally. A deputation of these monks, with Staupitz and Link at their head came to Luther at Wittenberg on the 4th or 5th of September, and received his promise to comply with their wishes. At this convention, Staupitz, who felt his strength no longer equal to the difficult questions and controversies of the time, had resigned his office as Vicar of the Order, and Link had succeeded him. Luther saw him now at Wittenberg for the last time. He retired in quiet seclusion to Salzburg, where the Archbishop was his personal friend.

But Luther's spirit would not let him desist for a moment from prosecuting his contest with Rome. He had yet 'a little song' to sing about her. He was in fact at work in August, while rumours were already afloat that Eck was on his way with the bull, upon a new tract, and had even begun to have it printed. It was to treat of the 'Babylonian Captivity of the Church,' taking as its subject the Christian sacraments. Luther knew that in this he cut deeper into the theological and religious principles of the Church, which had come under discussion in his quarrel with Rome, than in all his demands for reform, put forward in his address to the nobility. For while, in common with the Church herself, he saw in the Sacraments, instituted by Christ, the most sacred acts of worship, and the channels through which salvation itself, forgiveness, grace, and strength are imparted from above, in those principles he saw them limited by man's caprice in their original scope and meaning, robbed of their true significance, and made the instruments of Papal and priestly domination, while other pretended sacraments were joined to them, never instituted by Christ. On this account he complained of the tyranny to which these sacraments, and with them the Church, were subject, of the captivity in which they lay. Against him were arrayed not only the hierarchy, but the whole forces of Scholastic learning. He knew that what he now propounded would sound preposterous to these opponents; he would make, he said, his feeble revilers feel their blood run cold. But he met them in the armour of profound erudition, and with learned arguments lucidly and concisely expressed in Latin. At the same time his language, where he explains the real essence of the sacraments, shows a clearness and religious fervour which no layman could fail to understand.

The subject of the deepest importance to Luther in this treatise was the sacrament of the altar. He dwells on the mutilated form, without the cup, in which the Lord's Supper was given to the laity; on the doctrine invented about the change of the bread, instead of keeping to the simple word of Scripture; and, lastly, on the substitution of a sacrifice, supposed to be offered to God by the priest, for the institution ordained by Christ for the nourishment of the faithful. The withholding of the cup he calls an act of ungodliness and tyranny, beyond the power of either Pope or Council to prescribe. Against the sacrifice of the mass he had published just before a sermon in German. He was well aware that his principles involved, as indeed he intended, a revolution of the whole service, and an attack on an ordinance, upon which a number of other abuses, of great importance to the hierarchy, depended. But he ventured it, because God's word obliged him to do it. So now he proceeds to describe, in contrast to this mass, the one of true Christian institution, and resting wholly, as he conceived it, on the words of Christ, when instituting the Last Supper, 'Take, and eat,' etc. Christ would here say, 'See, thou poor sinner, out of pure love I promise to thee, before thou canst either earn or promise anything, forgiveness of all thy sins, and eternal life, and to assure thee of this I give here my Body and shed my Blood; do thou, by my death, rest assured of this promise, and take as a sign my Body and my Blood.'

For the worthy celebration of this mass, nothing is required but faith, which shall trust securely in this promise; with this faith will come the sweetest stirrings of the heart, which will unfold itself in love, and yearn for the good Saviour, and in Him will become a new creature.

As regards baptism Luther lamented that it was no longer allowed to possess the true significance and value it ought to have for a man's whole life. Whereas in truth the person baptized received a promise of mercy from God, to which time after time, even from the sins of his future life, he might and was bound to turn, it was taught, that in sinning after baptism, the Christian was like a shipwrecked man, who, instead of the ship, could only reach a plank; this being the sacrament of penance, with its accompanying outward formalities. Whereas further, in true baptism he had vowed to dedicate his whole life and conduct to God, other vows of human invention were now demanded of him. Whereas he then became a full partaker of Christian liberty, he was now burdened with ordinances of the Church, devised by man.

Concerning this sacrament of penance, with confession, absolution, and its other adjuncts, Luther rates at its full value the word of forgiveness spoken to the individual, and values also the free confession made to his Christian brother by the Christian seeking comfort. But confession, he said, had been perverted into an institution of compulsion and torture. Instead of leading the tempted brother to trust in God's mercy, he was ordered to perform acts of penance, whereby nominally to give satisfaction to God, but in reality to minister to the ambition and insatiable avarice of the Roman see.

From all these abuses and perversions Luther seeks to liberate the sacraments, and restore them in their purity to Christians. Nevertheless, he takes care to insist on the fact that it is not the mere external ceremony, the act of the priest in administering, and the visible partaking of the receiver, that make the latter a sharer in the promised grace and blessedness. This, he says, depends upon a hearty faith in the Divine promise. He who believes enjoys the benefit of the sacrament, even though its outward administration be denied him.

The mediæval Church ordained four other sacraments, namely, confirmation, marriage, consecration of priests, and extreme unction. But Luther refuses to acknowledge any of these as a sacrament. Marriage, he says, in its sacramental aspect, was not an institution of the New Testament, nor was it connected with any especial promise of grace. It was but a holy moral ordinance of daily life, existing since the beginning of the world and among those who were not Christians as well as those who were. At the same time he takes the opportunity to protest against those human regulations with which even this ordinance had been invaded by the Romish Church, especially against the arbitrary obstacles to marriage she had created. Even these were made a source of revenue to her, by the granting of dispensations. For the other three sacraments there was no especial promise. In the Epistle of St. James (v. 14), where it speaks of anointing the sick with oil, the allusion is not to extreme unction to the dying, but to the exercise of that wonderful Apostolic gift of healing the sick through the power of faith and prayer. With regard to the consecration of priests, Luther repeats the principles laid down in his address to the nobility. Ordination consists simply of this, that out of a community, all of whom are priests, one is chosen for the particular work of administering God's word. If, as in consecration, the hand is laid upon him, this is a human custom and not instituted by the Lord Himself. But in truth, says Luther, the outrageous tyranny of the clergy, with their priestly bodily anointing, their tonsure, and their dress, would arrogate a higher position than other Christians anointed with the Spirit; these are counted almost as unworthy as dogs to belong to the Church. And most seriously he warns a man not to strive for that outward anointing, unless he is earnestly intent on the true service of the gospel, and has disclaimed all pretension to become, by consecration, better than lay Christians.

In conclusion Luther declares: he hears that Papal excommunication is prepared for him, to force him to recant. In that case this little treatise shall form part of his recantation. After that he will soon publish the rest, the like of which has never been seen or heard by the Romish see.

In the beginning of October, probably on the 6th of that month, the book was issued. Luther had heard some ten days before that Eck had actually arrived with the bull. He had already caused it to be posted publicly at Meissen on September 21. Early in October he sent a copy of it also to the university of Wittenberg.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BULL OF EXCOMMUNICATION, AND LUTHER'S REPLY.

At Rome, the bull, now newly arrived in Germany, had been published as early as June 16. It had been considered, when at length, under the pressure of the influences described above, the subject was taken up in earnest, very carefully in the Papal consistory. The jurists there were of opinion that Luther should be cited once more, but their views did not prevail. As for the negotiations, conducted through Miltitz, for an examination of Luther before the Archbishop of Treves, no heed was now paid to the affair.

The bull begins with the words, 'Arise, O Lord, and avenge Thy cause.' It proceeds to invoke St. Peter, St. Paul, the whole body of the saints, and the Church. A wild boar had broken into the vineyard of the Lord, a wild beast was there seeking to devour &c. Of the heresy against which it was directed, the Pope, as he states, had additional reason to complain, since the Germans, among whom it had broken out, had always been regarded by him with such tender affection: he gives them to understand that they owed the Empire to the Romish Church. Forty-one propositions from Luther's writings are then rejected and condemned, as heretical or at least scandalous and corrupting, and his works collectively are sentenced to be burnt. As to Luther himself, the Pope calls God to witness that he has neglected no means of fatherly love to bring him into the right way. Even now he is ready to follow towards him the example of Divine mercy which wills not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live; and so once more he calls upon him to repent, in which case he will receive him graciously like the prodigal son. Sixty days are given him to recant. But if he and his adherents will not repent, they are to be regarded as obstinate heretics and withered branches of the vine of Christ, and must be punished according to law. No doubt the punishment of burning was meant; the bull in fact expressly condemns the proposition of Luther which denounces the burning of heretics.

All this was called then at Rome, and has been called even latterly by the Papal party, 'the tone rather of fatherly sorrow than of penal severity.' The means by which the bull had been brought about, made it fitting that Eck himself should be commissioned with its circulation throughout Germany, and especially with its publication in Saxony. More than this, he received the unheard of permission to denounce any of the adherents of Luther at his pleasure, when he published the bull.

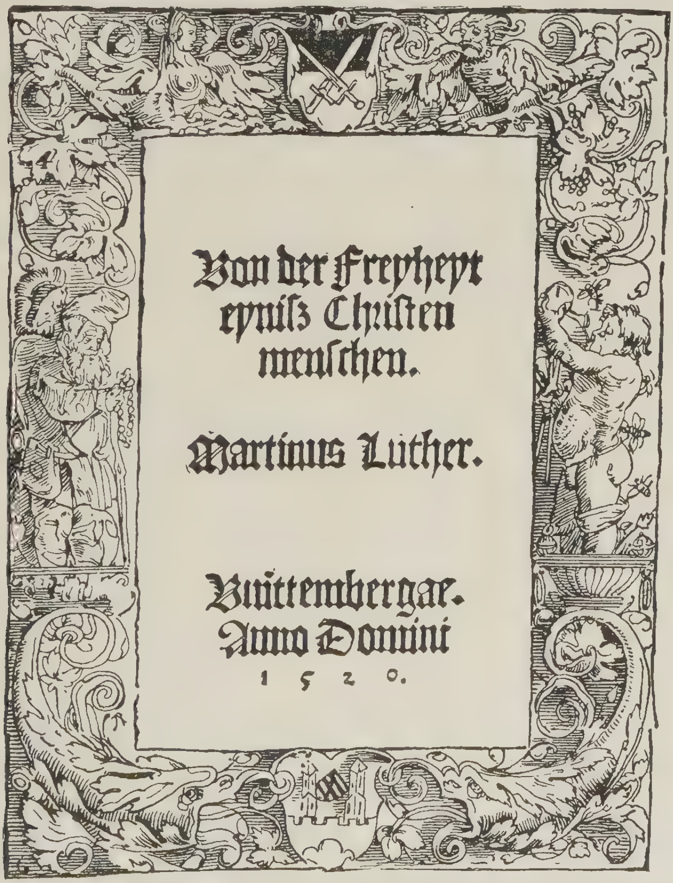
Accordingly, Eck had the bull publicly posted up in September at Meissen, Merseburg, and Brandenburg. He was charged, moreover, by a Papal brief, in the event of Luther's refusing to submit, to call upon the temporal power to punish the heretic. But at Leipzig, where the magistrate, by order of Duke George, had to present him with a goblet full of money, he was so hustled in the streets by his indignant opponents, that he was forced to take refuge in the Convent of St. Paul, and hastened to pursue his journey by night, whilst the city officials rode about the neighbourhood with the bull. A number of Wittenberg students, adds Miltitz, made their appearance also at Leipzig, who 'behaved in a good-for-nothing way towards him.'

At Wittenberg, where the publication of the bull rested with the university, the latter notified its arrival to the Elector, and objected for various reasons to publish it, alleging, in particular, that Eck, its sender, was not furnished with proper authority from the Pope. Luther now for the first time felt himself, as he wrote to Spalatin, really free, being at length convinced that the Popedom was Antichrist and the seat of Satan. He was not at all discouraged by a letter sent at this time by Erasmus from Holland to Wittenberg, saying that no hopes could be placed in the Emperor Charles, as he was in the hands of the Mendicant Friars. As for the bull, so extraordinary were its contents, that he wished to consider it a forgery.

Still the promise which Luther had given to his Augustinian brethren, only a few weeks before, under pressure from Miltitz, remained as yet unfulfilled. Nor did Miltitz himself wish the threads of the web then spun to slip from his fingers. Even at this hour, with the consent and at the wish of the Elector, an interview had been arranged between Miltitz and Luther at the Castle of Lichtenberg (now Lichtenburg, in the district of Torgau), where the monks of St. Antony were then housed. Just as Miltitz, as we have seen, had thought to be able to avert the bull by getting Luther to write a letter to the Pope, so now he promised the Elector still to conciliate the Pope by that means. Only the letter was to be dated back to the time, before the publication of the bull, when Luther first gave his consent to write it. Its substance was to be as then agreed upon; Luther, as Miltitz expressed it, was to 'eulogise the Pope personally in a manner agreeable to him,' and at the same time submit to him an historical statement of what he had done. Luther consented to publish a letter in these terms, in Latin and German, under date of September 6, and immediately gave effect to his promise.

It is hardly conceivable how Miltitz could still have nurtured such a hope. Neither his wish to ingratiate himself with the Elector Frederick, and to checkmate the plans of Eck whom he detested, nor his personal vanity and flippancy of character, are sufficient to account for it. He must have learnt from his own previous personal intercourse with the Pope, and his experiences of the Papal court, that Leo did not take up Church questions and controversies so gravely and so seriously as not to remain fully open all the time to influences and considerations of other kinds, and that around him were parties and influential personages, arrayed in mutual hostility and rivalry. He must have been strangely ignorant of the state of things at Rome. But as to Luther and his cause there was no longer any hesitation in that quarter.

In what sense Luther himself was willing to comply with the demand of Miltitz, the contents of his letter suffice to show. He makes it clear that nothing was further from his intention than to appease the angry Pontiff by any dexterous artifices or concealments. The assurance required from him, that he had no wish to attack the Pope personally, he construes in its literal terms, apart altogether from the official character and acts of Leo. And in fact against his personal character and conduct he had never said a word. But he takes this opportunity, at the same time, of speaking to him plainly, as a Christian is bound to do to his fellow-Christian; of repeating to him, face to face, the severest charges yet made by him against the Romish chair; of excusing Leo's own conduct in this chair simply and solely on the ground that he regarded him as a victim of the monstrous corruption which surrounded him, and of warning him once more against it as a brother. He tells him to his face that he himself, the Holy Father, must acknowledge that the Papal see was more wicked and shameful than any Sodom, Gomorrah, or Babylon; that God's wrath had fallen upon it without ceasing; that Rome, which had once been the gate of heaven, was now an open jaw of hell. Most earnestly he warns Leo against his flatterers, – the 'ear-ticklers' who would make him a God. He assures him that he wishes him all that is good, and therefore he wishes that he should not be devoured by these jaws of hell, but on the contrary, should be freed from this godless idolatry of parasites, and be placed in a position where he would be able to live on some smaller ecclesiastical preferment, or on his own patrimony. As for the historical retrospect which Miltitz wanted, and which Luther briefly appends to this letter, all that the latter says in vindication of himself is, that it was not his own fault, but that of his enemies, who had driven him further



Von der Freyheyt
eyniſz Chriſten
menſchen.

Martinus Luther.

Wittembergae.
Anno Domini
1 5 2 0.

FIG. 23.—TITLE-PAGE, slightly reduced, of the original Tract 'On the Liberty of a Christian Man.' The Saxon swords are represented above, and the arms of Wittenberg below.

and further onward, that 'no small part of the unchristian doings at Rome had been dragged to light.'

Luther sent with this letter, as a present to the Pope, a pamphlet entitled 'On the Liberty of a Christian Man.' This is no controversial treatise intended for the great struggle of churchmen and theologians, but a tract to minister to 'simple men.' For their benefit he wished to describe compendiously the 'sum of a Christian life'; to deal thoroughly with the question, 'What was a Christian? and how he was to use the liberty which Christ had won and given to him.'

He premises as an axiom that a Christian is a free lord over all things, and subject to nobody. He considers, first of all, the new, inner, spiritual man, and asks what makes him a good and free Christian. Nothing external, he says, can make him either good or free. It does not profit the soul if the body puts on sacred vestments, or fasts, or prays with the lips. To make the soul live, and be good and free, there is nothing else in heaven or on earth but the Holy Scriptures, in other words, God's Word of comfort by His dear Son Jesus Christ, through Whom our sins are forgiven us. In this Word the soul has perfect joy, happiness, peace, light, and all good things in abundance. And to obtain this, nothing more is required of the soul than what is told us in the Scriptures, namely, to give itself to Jesus with firm faith and to trust joyfully in Him. At first, no doubt, God's command must terrify a man, seeing that it must be fulfilled, or man condemned; but when once he has been brought thereby to recognise his own worthlessness, then comes God's promise and the gospel, and says, Have faith in Christ, in Whom I promise thee all grace; believe in Him, and thou hast Him. A right faith so blends the soul with God's word, that the virtues of the latter become her own, as the iron becomes glowing hot from its union with the fire. And the soul becomes joined to Christ as a bride to the bridegroom; her wedding-ring is faith. All that Christ, the rich and noble bridegroom possesses, He makes His bride's;

all that she has, He takes unto Himself. He takes upon Himself her sins, so that they are swallowed up in Him and in His unconquerable righteousness. Thus the Christian is exalted above all things, and becomes a lord; for nothing can injure his salvation; everything must be subject to him and help towards his salvation; it is a spiritual kingdom. And thus all Christians are priests; they can all approach God through Christ, and pray for others. 'Who can comprehend the honour and dignity of a Christian? Through his kingship he has power over all things, through his priesthood he has power over God, for God does what he desires and prays for.'

But the Christian, as Luther states in his second axiom, is not only this new inner man. He has another will in his flesh, which would make him captive to sin. Accordingly, he dare not be idle, but must work hard to drive out evil lusts and mortify his body. He lives, moreover, among other men on earth, and must labour together with them. And as Christ, though Himself full of the Kingdom of God, for our sake stripped Himself of His power and ministered as a servant, so should we Christians, to whom God through Christ has given the Kingdom of all goodness and blessedness, and therewith all that is sufficient to satisfy us, do freely and cheerfully for our heavenly Father whatever pleases Him, and do unto our neighbours as Christ has done for us. In particular, we must not despise the weakness and weak faith of our neighbour, nor vex him with the use of our liberty, but rather minister with all we have to his improvement. Thus the Christian, who is a free lord and master, becomes a useful servant of all and subject to all. But he does these works, not that he may become thereby good and blessed in the sight of God; he is already blessed through his faith, and what he does now he does freely and gratuitously. Luther thus sums up in conclusion: 'A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour; in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love. Through faith he rises above himself in God, from God he descends again below himself through love; and yet remains always in God and in godlike love.'

This tract was a remarkable pendant to Luther's remarkable letter to the Pope. His Holiness, so he wrote to him in his dedication, might taste from its contents what kind of occupation the author would rather, and might with more profit, be engaged in, if only the godless Papal flatterers did not hinder him. And in fact the Pope could plainly see from it how Luther lived and laboured, with his inmost being, in these profound but simple ideas of Christian truth, and how he was inwardly compelled and delighted to represent them in their noble simplicity. The whole tone and tenor of this dedication, so tranquil, fervent, and tender, shows further what profound peace reigned in the soul of this vehement champion of the faith, and what happiness the excommunicated heretic found in his God. Next to Luther's Address to the German Nobility and his Babylonian Captivity, this tract is one of the most important contributions of his pen to the cause of the Reformation. It is clear from its pages that when Luther wrote his letter, at the request of Miltitz, to the Pope, he had no thought of making peace with the Papacy, or of even a moment's truce in the campaign.

The bull of excommunication he met in the manner intimated to Spalatin from the first. He launched a short tract against it, 'On the new Bull and Falsehoods of Eck,' treating it as Eck's forgery. This he followed up with another tract in German and Latin, 'Against the Bull of Antichrist.' He was resolved to unmask the blindness and wickedness of the Roman evil-doers. He saw partly his own real doctrines perverted, partly the Christian and Scriptural truth that his doctrines contained, stigmatised as heresy and condemned. He declared that if the Pope did not retract and condemn this bull, no one would doubt that he was the enemy of God and the disturber of Christianity.

He then solemnly renewed, on November 17, the appeal to a Council, which he had made two years before. But how was his attitude changed since then! He, the accused and condemned heretic, now himself proclaims condemnation and ruin to his enemy, the antichristian power that seeks to domineer the world. Nor is it only from a future Council, and one constituted as the previous great assemblies of the Church, that he expects and demands protection for himself and the Christian truth; again and again he calls upon the Christian laity to assist him. Thus in his appeal now published, he invites the Emperor Charles, the Electors and Princes of the Empire, the counts, barons, and nobles, the town councils, and all Christian authorities throughout Germany, to support him and his appeal, that so the true Christian belief and the freedom of a Council might be saved. Similarly, in the Latin edition of his tract against the bull, he calls upon the Emperor Charles, on Christian kings and princes and all who believe in Christ, together with all Christian bishops and learned doctors, to resist the iniquities of the Popedom. In his German version he defends himself against the charge of stirring up the laity against the Pope and priesthood; but he asks if, indeed, the laity will be reconciled, or the Pope excused, by the command to burn the truth. The Pope himself, he says, and his bishops, priests, and monks are wrestling to their own downfall, through this iniquitous bull, and want to bring upon themselves the hatred of the laity. 'What wonder were it, should princes, nobles, and laymen beat them on the head, and hunt them out of the country?'

Hutten now followed with a stormy demand for a general rising of Germany against the tyranny of Rome, whose hirelings and emissaries were to be chased away by main force. When two papal legates, Aleander and Caraccioli, appeared on the Rhine to execute the bull and work upon the Emperor in person, he was anxious to strike a blow at them on his own account, little good as, on calm reflection, it was evident could have come of it. Luther, on hearing of it, could not refrain remarking in a letter to Spalatin, 'If only he had caught them!'

Luther however persisted in repeating to himself and his friends the warning of the Psalmist, 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them.' Nay, when Spalatin, who had gone with the Elector to the Emperor, told him how little was to be hoped for from the latter, he expressed to him his joy at finding that he too had learned the same lesson. God, he said, would never have entrusted simple fishermen with the Gospel, if it had needed worldly potentates to propagate it. It was to the Last Day that he looked with full confidence for the overthrow of Antichrist. And, indeed, his idea that Antichrist had long reigned at Rome was connected in his mind with the belief that the Last Day was close at hand. Of this, as he wrote to Spalatin, he was convinced, and for many strong reasons.

And in fact the Emperor Charles, before leaving the Netherlands, on his journey to Aix-la-Chapelle to be crowned, had already been induced by Aleander to take his first step against Luther. He had consented to the execution of the sentence in the bull, condemning Luther's works to be burnt, and had issued orders to that effect throughout the Netherlands. They were burnt in public at Louvain, Cologne, and Mayence. At Cologne this was done while he was staying there. It was in this town that the two legates approached the Elector Frederick with the demand to have the same done in his territory, and to execute due punishment on the heretic himself, or at least to keep him close prisoner, or deliver him over to the Pope. Frederick however refused, saying that Luther must first be heard by impartial judges. Erasmus also, who was then staying at Cologne, expressed himself to the same effect, in an opinion obtained from him by Frederick through Spalatin. At an interview with the Elector he said to him, 'Luther has committed two great faults; he has touched the Pope on his crown and the monks on their bellies.' The Archbishop of Mayence, Cardinal Albert, received directions from the Pope to take more decisive and energetic steps against Hutten as well. The burning of Luther's books at Mayence was effected without hindrance, though Hutten was able to inform Luther that, according to the account received from a friend, Aleander narrowly escaped stoning, and the multitude were all the more inflamed in favour of Luther. The legates in triumph proceeded to carry out their mission elsewhere

Luther, however, lost no time in following up their execution of the bull with his reply. On December 10 he posted a public announcement that the next morning, at nine o'clock, the antichristian decretals, that is, the Papal law-books, would be burnt, and he invited all the Wittenberg students to attend. He chose for this purpose a spot in front of the Elster Gate, to the east of the town, near the Augustinian convent. A multitude poured forth to the scene. With Luther appeared a number of other doctors and masters, and among them Melancthon and Carlstadt. After one of the masters of arts had built up a pile, Luther laid the decretals upon it, and the former applied the fire. Luther then threw the Papal bull into the flames, with the words 'Because thou hast vexed the Holy One of the Lord,[1] let the everlasting fire consume thee.' Whilst Luther with the other teachers returned to the town, some hundreds of students remained upon the scene, and sang a Te Deum, and a Dirge for the decretals. After the ten o'clock meal, some of the young students, grotesquely attired, drove through the town in a large carriage, with a banner emblazoned with a bull four yards in length, amidst the blowing of brass trumpets and other absurdities. They collected from all quarters a mass of Scholastic and Papal writings, and especially those of Eck, and hastened with them and the bull, to the pile, which their companions had meanwhile kept alight. Another Te Deum was then sung, with a requiem, and the hymn 'O du armer Judas.'

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[1] It is obvious that he refers to Christ, who is spoken of in Scripture as the Holy One of God (St. Mark i. 24, Acts ii. 27), not, as ignorance and malice have suggested, to himself.

Luther at his lecture the next day told his hearers with great earnestness and emotion what he had done. The Papal chair he said, would yet have to be burnt. Unless with all their hearts they abjured the Kingdom of the Pope, they could not obtain salvation.

He next announced and justified his act in a short treatise entitled 'Why the Books of the Pope and his disciples were burnt by Dr. Martin Luther.' 'I, Martin Luther,' he says, 'doctor of Holy Scripture, an Augustinian of Wittenberg, make known hereby to everyone, that by my wish, advice, and act, on Monday after St. Nicholas' day, in the year 1520, the books of the Pope of Rome, and of some of his disciples, were burnt. If anyone wonders, as I fully expect they will, and asks for what reason and by whose command I did it, let this be his answer.' Luther considers it his bounden duty, as a baptized Christian, a sworn doctor of Holy Scripture, and a daily preacher, to root out, on account of his office, all unchristian doctrines. The example of others, on whom the same duty devolved, but who shrank from doing as he did, would not deter him. 'I should not,' he says, 'be excused in my own sight; of that my conscience is assured, and my spirit, by God's grace, has been roused to the necessary courage.' He then proceeds to cite from the law-books thirty erroneous doctrines, in glorification of the Papacy, which deserved to be burnt. The sum total of this Canon law was as follows: 'The Pope is a God on earth, above all things, heavenly and earthly, spiritual and temporal, and everything is his, since no one durst say, What doest thou?' This, says Luther, is the abomination of desolation (St. Matth. xxiv. 15), or in other words Antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 4).

Simultaneously with this, he set out in a longer and exhaustive work the 'ground and reason' of all his own articles which had been condemned by the bull. He takes his stand upon God's word in Scripture against the dogmas of the earthly God;—upon the revelation by God Himself, which, to everyone who studies it deeply and with devotion, will lighten his understanding, and make clear its substance and meaning. What though, as he is reminded, he is only a solitary, humble man, he is sure of this, that God's Word is with him.

To Staupitz, who felt faint-hearted and desponding about the bull, Luther wrote, saying that, when burning it, he trembled at first and prayed; but now he felt more rejoiced than at any other act in all his life. He now released himself finally from the restraints of those monastic rules, with which, as we have remarked before, he had always tormented himself, besides performing the higher duties of his calling. He was freed now, as he wrote to his friend Lange, by the authority of the bull, from the commands of his Order and of the Pope, being now an excommunicated man. Of this he was glad; he retained merely the garb and lodging of a monk: he had more than enough of real duties to perform with his daily lectures and sermons, with his constant writings, educational, edifying, and polemical, and with his letters, discourses, and the assistance he was able to give his brethren.

By this bold act, Luther consummated his final rupture with the Papal system, which for centuries had dominated the Christian world, and had identified itself with Christianity. The news of it must also have made the fire which his words had kindled throughout Germany, blaze out in all its violence. He saw now, as he wrote to Staupitz, a storm raging, such as only the Last Day could allay; so fiercely were passions aroused on both sides.

Germany was then, in fact, in a state of excitement and tension more critical than at any other period of her history. Side by side with Luther stood Hutten, in the forefront of the battle with Rome. The bull he published with sarcastic comments: the burning of Luther's works of devotion he denounced in Latin and German verses. Eberlin von Günzburg, who shortly after began to wield his pen as a popular writer on reform, called these two men 'two chosen messengers of God.' A German Litany, which appeared early in 1521, implored God's grace and help for Martin Luther, the unshaken pillar of the Christian faith, and for the brave German knight Ulrich Hutten, his Pylades.

Hutten also wrote now in German for the German people, both in prose and verse. During his stay with Sickingen in the winter at his Castle of Ebernburg, he read to him Luther's works, which roused in this powerful warrior an active sympathy with the doctrines of the Reformation, and stirred up projects in his mind, of what his own strong arm could accomplish for the good cause.

Pamphlets, both anonymous and pseudonymous, were circulated in increasing numbers among the people. They took the form chiefly of dialogues, in which laymen, in a simple Christian spirit, and with their natural understanding, complain of the needs of Christendom, ask questions and are enlightened. The outward evils of the Papal system are put clearly before the people:—the scandals among the priesthood and in the convents, the iniquities of the Romish courtiers and creatures of the Pope, who pandered with menial subservience to the magnates at Rome, in order to fatten on German benefices, and reap their harvest of taxes and extortions of every kind. The simple Word of God, with its sublime evangelical truths, must be freed from the sophistries woven round it by man, and be made accessible to all without distinction. Luther is represented as its foremost champion, and a true man of the people, whose testimony penetrated to the heart. His portrait, as painted by Cranach, was circulated together with his small tracts. In later editions the Holy Ghost appears in the form of a dove hovering above his head; his enemies spread the calumny, that Luther intended this emblem to represent himself.

Satirical pictures also were used as weapons on both sides in this contest. Cranach pourtrayed the meek and suffering Saviour on one side, and on the other the arrogant Roman Antichrist, in the twenty-six woodcuts of his 'Passion of Christ and Antichrist:' Luther added short texts to these pictures.

Luther's enemies now began, on their side, to write in German and for the people. The most talented among them, as regards vigorous, popular German and coarse satire, was the Franciscan Thomas Murner; but his theology seemed to Luther so weak, that he only favoured him once with a brief allusion. He entered now into a longer literary duel with the Dresden theologian Emser, who had challenged him after the disputation at Leipzig, and who now published a work 'Against the Unchristian Address of Martin Luther to the German Nobility.' Luther replied with a tract 'To the Goat at Leipzig,' Emser with another 'To the Bull at Wittenberg,' Luther with another 'On the Answer of the Goat at Leipzig,' and Emser with a third, 'On the furious Answer of the Bull at Wittenberg.' Luther, whose reply to Emser's original work had been directed to the first sheets that appeared, met the work, when published in its complete form, with his 'Answer to the over-Christian, over-priestly, over-artful Book of the Goat Emser.' Emser followed up with a 'Quadruplica,' to which Luther rejoined with another treatise entitled 'A Refutation by Doctor Luther of Emser's error, extorted by the most learned priest of God, H. Emser.' When later, during Luther's residence at the Wartburg, Emser published a reply, Luther let him have the last word. Nothing new was contributed to the great struggle by this interchange of polemics. The most effective point made by Emser and the other defenders of the old Church system, was the old charge that Luther, one man, presumed to oppose the whole of Christendom as hitherto constituted, and by the overthrow of all foundations and authorities of the Church, to bring unbelief, distraction, and disturbance upon Church and State. Thus Emser says once in German doggrel, that Luther imagined that

> What Church and Fathers teach was nought;
> None lived but Luther;—so he thought.

In threatening Luther with the consequences of his heresy, he never failed to hold up Huss as a bugbear.

In Germany, as Emser complains, there was already 'such quarrelling, noise, and uproar, that not a district, town, village, or house was free from partisans, and one man was against another.' Aleander wrote to Rome saying that everywhere exasperation and excitement prevailed, and the Papal bull was laughed at. Among the adherents of the old Church system one heard rumours of strange and terrible import. A letter written shortly after the burning of the bull, gave out that Luther reckoned on thirty-five thousand Bohemians, and as many Saxons and other North Germans, who were ready, like the Goths and Vandals of old, to march on Italy and Rome. But it was evident, even at this stage, that from rancorous words to energetic and self-sacrificing action was a long step to take. Even in central Germany the bull was executed without any disturbance breaking out; and that in the bishoprics of Meissen and Merseburg, which were adjacent to Wittenberg. Pirkheimer and Spengler at Nüremberg, whose names Eck had included in the bull, now bowed to the authority of the Pope, represented though it was by their personal enemy.

Hutten, who saw his hopes in the Emperor's brother deceived, and believed his own liberty and even his life was menaced by the Papal bull, burned with impatient ardour to strike a blow. He was anxious also to see whether a resort to force, after his own meaning of the term, would meet with any support from the Elector Frederick. He ventured even, when speaking of Sickingen's lofty mission, to refer to the precedent of Ziska, the powerful champion of the Hussites, who had once been the terror and abomination of the Germans. He, a member of the proud Equestrian order, was willing now to join hands with the towns and the burghers to do battle with Rome for the liberty of Germany. But, passionate as were his words, it was by no means clear what particular end under present circumstances he sought to achieve by means of arms. Sickingen, who had grasped the situation in a practical spirit, advised him to moderate his impatience, and sought, for his own part, to keep on good terms with the Emperor, in whom Hutten accordingly renewed his hopes. Each, in short, had overrated the influence which Sickingen really possessed with the Emperor.

In this posture of affairs, Luther reverted, with increased conviction, to his original opinion, that the future must be left with God alone, without trusting to the help of man. Hutten himself had written to him, during the Diet of Worms, as follows: 'I will fight manfully with you for Christ; but our counsels differ in this respect, that mine are human, while you, more perfect than I am, trust solely in those of God.' And when Hutten seemed really bent on taking the sword, Luther declared to him and to others, with all decision of purpose: 'I would not have man fight with force and bloodshed for the Gospel. By the Word has the world been subdued, by the Word has the Church been preserved, by the Word will she be restored. As Antichrist has begun without a blow, so without a blow will Antichrist be crushed by the Word.' Even against the Romish hirelings among the German clergy, he would have no acts of violence committed, such as were committed in Bohemia. He had not laboured with the German nobility to have such men restrained by the sword, but by advice and command. He was only afraid that their own rage would not allow of peaceful means to check them, but would bring misery and disaster upon their heads.

His expectation—not indeed ungrounded—of the approaching end of the world, to which, as we have seen, he alluded in a letter to Spalatin on January 16, 1521, Luther now announced more fully in a book, written in answer to an attack by the Romish theologian Ambrosius Catharinus. He based his opinion on the prophecies of the Old and New Testament, on which Christian men and Christian communities, sore pressed in the battle with the powers of darkness, had been wont ere then to rely, in the sure hope of the approaching victory of God. Luther referred in particular to the vision of Daniel (chap. viii.), where he states that after the four great Kingdoms of the World, the last of which Luther takes to be the Roman Empire, a bold and crafty ruler should rise up, and 'by his policy should cause craft to prosper in his hand, and should stand up against the Prince of princes, but should be broken without hand.' He saw this vision fulfilled in the Popedom; which must, therefore, be destroyed 'without hand,' or outward force. St. Paul, in his view, said the same in the passage in which (2 Thess. ii.) he foreshadowed long before the Roman Antichrist. That 'man of sin' who set himself up as God in the temple of God, 'the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.' So, said Luther, the Pope and his kingdom would not be destroyed by the laity, but would be reserved for a heavier punishment until the coming of Christ. He must fall, as he had raised himself, not 'with the hand,' but with the spirit of Satan. The Spirit must kill the spirit; the truth must reveal deceit.

Luther, as we shall see, had all his life held firmly to this belief that the end was near. As his glowing zeal pictured the loftiest images and contrasts to his mind, so also this assurance of victory was already before his eyes. In his hope of the near completion of the earthly history of Christianity and mankind, he became the instrument of carving out a new grand chapter in its career.

The announcement of the retractation required from Luther by the bull, was to have been sent to Rome within 120 days. Luther had given his answer. The Pope declared that the time of grace had expired; and on the 3rd of January Leo X. finally pronounced the ban against Luther and his followers, and an interdict on the places where they were harboured.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIET OF WORMS.

If we consider the powerful influences then at work to further the ecclesiastical movement in Germany, it seems reasonable to suppose that they would succeed in accomplishing its ends through the power of the Word alone, without any such bloodshed and political convulsions as were feared; and that Germany, therefore, though vexed with spiritual tempests—the 'tumult and uproar' whose outburst Luther already discerned—must inevitably rid herself of the forms and fetters of Romish Churchdom, by the sheer force of her new religious convictions. And, indeed, even in the short interval since Luther had commenced, and only with slow steps had advanced further in the contest, a success had been attained which no one at the beginning could have ventured to expect, or even hope for. Frederick the Wise, the Nestor among the great German Princes of the Empire, had plainly freed himself inwardly from those fetters, and though, as yet, he did not feel himself called upon to express his sentiments by decisive action, his conduct, nevertheless, could not fail to make an impression on those about him. The nobility and burgher class, among whom the new doctrines had made most progress, were, politically speaking, powerfully represented at the Diets. The most important of the spiritual lords, the Archbishop of Magdeburg and Mayence, who had most cause to resent Luther's onslaught on indulgences, had hitherto adopted a cautious and expectant attitude, which left him free to join at some future time a national revolt against his Romish sovereign. The Diets, indeed, had hitherto submitted to their old ecclesiastical grievances without any fear of the wrath or scolding of the Pope. But, as soon as the conviction prevailed among the Estates, that the pretensions of the Roman see had no eternal, Divine foundation, they could take in hand at once, on their own account, the reformation of the Church. As for the episcopacy, in particular, Luther had never desired, as his Address to the Nobility sufficiently showed, to interfere with or disturb it in any way, provided only the bishops would feed their flocks according to God's Word. An independent German episcopate would then have been well able to undertake the reforms necessary in the system of worship. Luther himself, as we shall see, wished and continued to wish that those reforms should be as few and simple as possible.

In the various German states which afterwards became Protestant, the work of reform was in fact accomplished, without any serious agitation, by the Princes themselves, in concert with their Estates; and in the free towns by the magistrates and representatives of the burghers, notwithstanding the fact that its opponents were supported by the majority of the Empire and by the Emperor himself, who was a staunch adherent of the Romish system. How much easier, in comparison, must the work of Evangelical reformation have been, had it been resolved on by the power of the Empire itself, in accord with the overwhelming voice of the whole nation.

Reference was made, and in significant terms, to the savage and cruel war of the Hussites. But no one could deny to Luther's teaching, a clearness, a religious depth, and a freedom from fanaticism, peculiar to itself, and utterly wanting in the preaching of the followers of Huss. Again, the wild Hussite wars, which were still fresh in the sorrowful memory of the Germans, had in the first instance been provoked by the use of force, on the part of the Church, against the Bohemians. When Germany revolted, Rome found no such means of force at her command.

It might fairly be questioned, if the thought were worth pursuing, whether Luther at that time had sufficient ground for looking for the triumph of his cause, not indeed to the power of the Word and the influences then active in his favour, but to the Day of the Lord, which he believed was near.

It is true that in such great crises of history as this, the final issue never depends alone on the character and conduct of particular personages, however eminent they may be. In this antichristian system of the Papacy, Luther saw Satanic powers at work, which blinded the human heart, and might indeed succeed, by dint of suffering and oppression, in overcoming for the moment the Word of God, but which could never finally extirpate or extinguish it. And we Protestants must confess that not only did a great mass of the German people remain bound by the spell of tradition, but that even to honest and independent-minded adherents of the old system, the interests of religion and morality might in reality have seemed to be seriously endangered by the new teaching and by the breach with the past. But never did the most momentous issue in the fortunes of the German nation and Church rest so entirely with one man as they did now with the German Emperor. Everything depended on this, whether he, as head of the Empire, should take the great work in hand, or should fling his authority and might into the opposite scale.

Charles had been welcomed in Germany as one whose youthful heart seemed likely to respond to the newly-awakened life and aspirations; as the son of an old German princely family, who by his election as Emperor had won a triumph over the foreign king Francis, supported though the latter was by the Pope. Rumour now alleged that he was in the hands of the Mendicant Friars: the Franciscan Glapio was his confessor and influential adviser, the very man who had instigated the burning of Luther's works.

He was, however, by no means so dependent on those about him as might have been supposed. His counsellors, in the general interests of his government, pursued an independent line of policy, and Charles himself, even in these

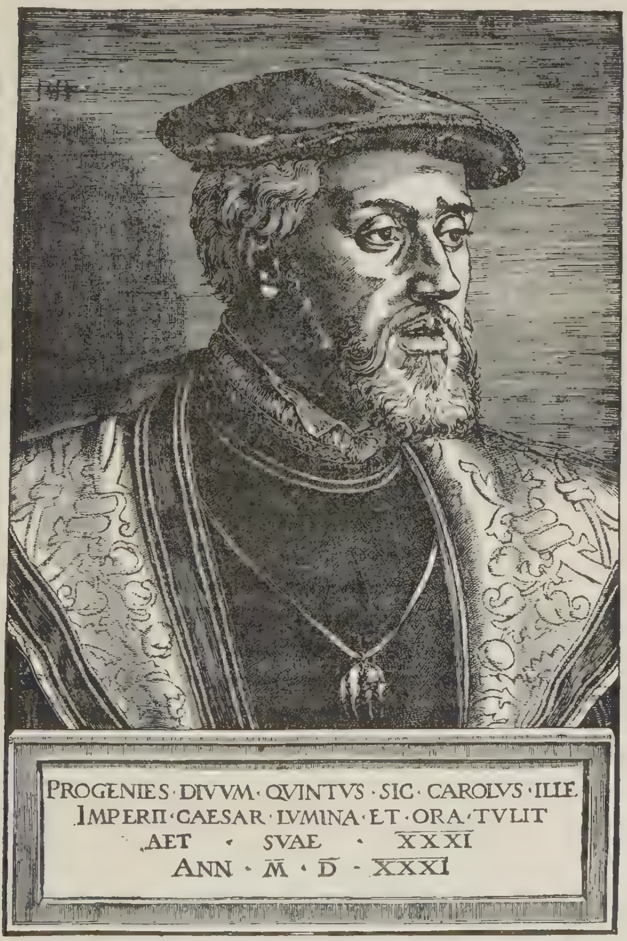
PROGENIES·DIVVM·QVINTVS·SIC·CAROLVS·ILLE
IMPERII·CAESAR·LVMINA·ET·ORA·TVLIT
AET · SVAE · XXXI
ANN · M · D · XXXI

Fig. 24.—Charles V. (From an engraving by B. Beham, in 1531.)

his youthful days, knew to assert his independence as a monarch and display his cleverness as a statesman.

But a German he was not, in spite of his grandfather Maximilian; he had not even an ordinary knowledge of the German language. First and foremost, he was King of Spain and Naples; in his Spanish kingdom he retained, even after his accession to the imperial dignity, the chief basis of his power. His religious training and education had familiarised him only with the strict orthodoxy of the Church and his duties in respect to her traditional ordinances. To these his conscience also constrained him to adhere. He never showed any inclination to investigate the opposite opinions of his German subjects, at least with any independent or critical exercise of judgment. A strict regard to his rights and duties as a sovereign was his sole guide, next to his religious principles, in dictating his conduct towards the Church. In Spain some reforms were being then introduced, based essentially on the doctrines and hierarchical constitution of the mediæval Church. Stricter discipline, in particular, was observed with regard to the clergy and monks, who were admonished to attend more faithfully to their duties of promoting the moral and religious welfare of the people; and the result was seen in a revival of popular interest in the forms and ordinances of religion. Furthermore, the crown enjoyed certain rights independently of the Roman Curia: an absolute monarchy was here ingeniously united with Papal absolutism. Such a union, however, sufficed in itself to make any severance of the German Church from the Papacy impossible under Charles V. The unity of his dominions was bound up with the unity of the Catholic Church, to which his subjects, alike in Spain and Germany, belonged. Added to this, he had to consider his foreign policy. Provoked as he had been by Leo X., who had leagued with France to prevent his election, still, with menaces of war from France, he saw the prudence of cultivating friendship, and contracting, if possible, an alliance with the Pope. The pressure desirable for this purpose could now be supplied by means of the very danger with which the Papacy was threatened by the great German heresy, and against which Rome so sorely needed the aid of a temporal power. At the same time, Charles was far too astute to allow his regard for the Pope, and his desire for the unity of the Church, to entangle his policy in measures for which his own power was inadequate, or by which his authority might be shaken, and possibly destroyed. Strengthened as was his monarchical power in Spain, in Germany he found it hemmed in and fettered by the Estates of the Empire and the whole contexture of political relations.

Such were the main points of view which determined for Charles V. his conduct towards Luther and his cause. Luther thus was at least a passive sharer in the game of high policy, ecclesiastical and temporal, now being played, and had to pursue his own course accordingly.

The imperial court was quickly enough acquainted with the state of feeling in Germany. The Emperor showed himself prudent at this juncture, and accessible to opinions differing from his own, however small cause his proclamations gave to the friends of Luther to hope for any positive act of favour on his part.

Whilst Charles was on his way up the Rhine, to hold, at the beginning of the New Year, a Diet at Worms, the Elector Frederick approached him with the request that Luther should at least be heard before the Emperor took any proceedings against him. The Emperor informed him in reply that he might bring Luther for this purpose to Worms, promising that the monk should not be molested. The Elector, however, felt doubts on this point: possibly he thought of the danger to which Huss had been exposed at Constance. But Luther, to whom he announced through Spalatin the Emperor's offer, replied immediately, 'If I am summoned, I will, so far as I am concerned, come; even if I have to be carried there ill; for no man can doubt that, if the Emperor calls me, I am called by the Lord.' Violence, he said, would no doubt be offered him; but God still lived, who had delivered the three youths from the fiery furnace at Babylon, and if it was not His will that he should be saved, his head was of little value. There was one thing only to beseech of God, that the Emperor might not commence his reign by shedding innocent blood to shield ungodliness: he would far rather perish by the hands of the Romanists alone. Some time before, Luther had thought of a place to fly to, in case it were impossible to stay at Wittenberg; Bohemia was always open to him. But now he roundly declared, 'I will not fly, still less can I recant.'

Meanwhile the Emperor began to reflect whether Luther, who lay already under the ban and interdict, ought to be admitted to the place of the Diet. As to what proceedings should be taken against him, if he came, long, wavering, and anxious negotiations now took place between the Emperor, the Estates, and the legate Aleander, at Worms, where the Estates assembled in January, and the Diet was opened on the 28th.

A Papal brief demanded the Emperor to enforce the bull, by which Luther was now definitely condemned, by an imperial edict. In vain, he wrote, had God girded him with the sword of supreme earthly power, if he did not use it against heretics, who were even worse than infidels. His advisers, however, were agreed in the conviction that he could not move in this matter without the consent of his Estates. Aleander sought to gain them over in an elaborate harangue. He, according to whose principles the appeal to a Council was a crime, cleverly diverted from himself the comparison and retort which his present arguments suggested, and insisted all the more on his complaint, that Luther always despised the authority of Councils and would take no correction from anyone. Glapio, then the Emperor's confessor and diplomatist, addressed himself, with expressions of wonderful friendship, to Frederick's chancellor, Brück. Even he found much that was good in Luther's writings, but the contents of his book, the 'Babylonian Captivity,' were detestable. All that need be done was that Luther should disclaim or retract that offensive work, so that what was good in his writings might bear fruit for the Church, and Luther, together with the Emperor, might co-operate in the work of true reform. He might be invited to meet some learned, impartial men at a suitable place, and submit himself to their judgment. This, at all events, would be a happy means of preventing his having to appear before the Emperor and the Estates of the Empire, and if he persisted in refusing to recant, of deciding then and there his fate. We must leave it an open question, how far Glapio still seriously thought it possible, by dint of threats and entreaties, to utilise Luther for effecting a reform in the Spanish sense, and as an instrument against any Pope who should prove hostile to the Emperor. But the Elector Frederick would undertake no responsibility in this dark design: he refused flatly to grant to Glapio the private audience he desired.

The Emperor acceded so far to the urgency of the Pope as to cause a draft mandate to be laid before the Estates, proposing that Luther should be arrested, and his protectors punished for high treason. The Frankfort deputy wrote home: 'The monk makes plenty of work. Some would gladly crucify him, and I fear he will hardly escape them; only they must take care that he does not rise again on the third day.' After seven days' excited debate in the Diet, in which the Elector took a prominent and lively part, an answer to the imperial mandate was at length agreed upon, offering for consideration 'whether, inasmuch as Luther's preaching, doctrines, and writings had awakened among the common people all kinds of thoughts, fancies, and desires, any good result or advantage would accrue from issuing the mandate alone in all its stringency, without first having cited Luther before them and heard him.' At the same time, his examination was to be so far restricted, that no discussion with him should be allowed, but simply the question put to him, 'whether or not he intended to insist upon the writings he had published against our holy Christian faith.' If he retracted them, he should be heard further on other points and matters, and dealt with in all equity upon them. If, on the contrary, he persisted in all or any of the articles at variance with the faith, then all the Estates of the Empire should, without further disputation, adhere to and help to maintain the faith handed down by their fathers, and the imperial edict should then go abroad throughout the land.

The Emperor, accordingly, on March 6, issued a citation to Luther, summoning him to Worms, to give 'information concerning his doctrines and books.' An imperial herald was sent to conduct him. In the event of his disobeying the citation, or refusing to retract, the Estates declared their consent to treat him as an open heretic.

Luther, therefore, had to renounce at once all hope of having the truth touching his articles of faith tested fairly at Worms by the standard of God's word in Scripture. Spalatin indicated to him the points on which, according to Glapio's statement, he would in any case be expected to make a public recantation.

It remained still doubtful, however, how far those articles would be extended, and how far the 'other points' might be stretched, or possibly be made the subject of further and profitable discussion, if he submitted in respect to the former. Glapio had made no reference to the question of the patristic belief in the infallibility of the Pope, or his absolute power over the Church collectively and her Councils: even the Papal nuncio himself had not ventured to touch on these subjects. There was room enough for the more liberal and independent principles entertained on these points by the members of the earlier reforming Councils, if only Luther had not disputed their authority with that of Councils altogether. The ecclesiastical abuses, against which the Diet had already remonstrated to the Pope, were just now at Worms the subject of general and bitter complaint. The imposts levied by Rome on ecclesiastical benefices and fiefs, mere outward symbols of supremacy it is true, but highly important to the Pope, swallowed up enormous sums; while the Empire hardly knew how to scrape together a miserable subsidy for the newly organised government and the expenses of justice, and men talked openly of retaining these Papal tributes, notwithstanding all protests from Rome, for these purposes. Even faithful adherents of the old Church system, like Duke George of Saxony, demanded a comprehensive reformation of the clergy, whose scandals were so destructive of religion, and, as the best means to effect this reformation, a General Council of the Church. Aleander had to report to Rome, that all parties were unanimous in this desire, so hateful to the Pope himself, and that the Germans wished to have the Council in their own country.

Luther formed his resolve at once on the two points required of him. He determined to obey the summons to the Diet, and, if there unconvicted of error, to refuse the recantation demanded.

The Emperor's citation was delivered to him on March 26 by the imperial herald, Kaspar Sturm, who was to accompany him to Worms. Within twenty-one days after its receipt, Luther was to appear before the Emperor; he was due therefore at Worms on April 16, at the latest.

Up till now he had continued uninterruptedly his arduous and multifarious labours, and, to use his own expression, like Nehemiah he carried on at once the work of peace and of war; he built with one hand, and wielded the sword with the other. His controversy with Catharinus he brought quickly to a conclusion. During March he finished the first part of his Exposition of the Gospel as read in church, which he had undertaken, as a peaceful and edifying work, at the request of the Elector, to whom he wrote a dedication; and he was now at work on a fervent and tender practical explanation of the *Magnificat*, which he had intended for his devoted friend, Prince John Frederick, the son of Duke John and nephew of the Elector Frederick. He addressed a short letter to him on March 31, enclosing the first printed sheets of this treatise; and the next day sent him the epilogue, addressed to his friend Link, to his reply to Catharinus, dedicated also to Link. 'I know,' he says here, 'and am certain, that our Lord Jesus Christ still lives and rules. Upon this knowledge and assurance I rely, and therefore I will not fear ten thousand Popes; for He Who is with us is greater than he who is in the world.'

On the following day, April 2, the Tuesday after Easter, he set out on his way to Worms. His friend Amsdorf and the Pomeranian nobleman Peter Swaven, who was then studying at Wittenberg, accompanied him. He took with him also, according to the rules of the Order, a brother of the Order, John Pezensteiner. The Wittenberg magistracy provided carriages and horses.

The way led past Leipzig, through Thuringia from Naumburg to Eisenach, then southward past Berka, Hersfeld, Grünberg, Friedberg, Frankfort, and Oppenheim. The herald rode on before in his coat of arms, and announced the man whose word had everywhere so mightily stirred the minds of people, and for whose future behaviour and fate friend and foe were alike anxious. Everywhere people collected to catch a glimpse of him.

On April 6 he was very solemnly received at Erfurt. The large majority of the university there were by this time full of enthusiasm for his cause. His friend Crotus, on his return from Italy, had been chosen Rector. The ban of excommunication had not been published by the university, and had been thrown into the water by the students. Justus Jonas was foremost in zeal; and even Erasmus, his honoured friend, had no longer been able to restrain him. Lange and others were active in preaching among the people.

Jonas hastened to Weimar to meet Luther on his approach. Forty members of the university, with the Rector at their head, went on horseback, accompanied by a number of others on foot, to welcome him at the boundary of the town. Luther had also a small retinue with him. Crotus expressed to him the infinite pleasure it was to see him, the great champion of the faith; whereupon Luther answered, that he did not deserve such praise, but he thanked them for their love. The poet Eoban also stammered out, as he said of himself, a few words; he afterwards described the progress in a set of Latin songs.

The following day, a Sunday, Luther spent at Erfurt. He preached there, in the church of the Augustine convent, a sermon which has been preserved. Beginning with the words of the Gospel of the day, 'Peace be unto you,' he spoke of the peace which we find through Christ the Redeemer, by faith in whom and in his work of salvation we are justified, without any works or merit of our own; of the freedom with which Christians may act in faith and love; and of the duty of every man, who possessed this peace of God, so to order his work and conduct, that it shall be useful not only to himself but to his neighbour. This he said in protest against the justification by works taught by most preachers, against the system of Papal commands, and against the wisdom of heathen teachers, of an Aristotle or a Plato. Of his present personal position and the difficult path he had now to tread, he took no thought, but only of the general obligation he was under, whatever other men might teach; 'I will speak the truth and must speak it; for that reason I am here, and take no money for it.' During the sermon a crash was suddenly heard in the overweighted balconies of the crowded church, the doors of which were blocked with multitudes eager to hear him. The crowd were about to rush out in a panic, when Luther exclaimed, 'I know thy wiles, thou Satan,' and quieted the congregation with the assurance that no danger threatened, it was only the devil who was carrying on his wicked sport.

Luther also preached in the Augustine convents at Gotha and Eisenach. At Gotha the people thought it significant that after the sermon the devil tore off some stones from the gable of the church.

In the inns Luther liked to refresh himself with music, and often took up the lute.

At Eisenach, however, he was seized with an attack of illness, and had to be bled. From Frankfort he writes to Spalatin, who was then at Worms, that he felt since then a degree of suffering and weakness unknown to him before.

On the way he found a new imperial edict posted up, which ordered all his books to be seized, as having been condemned by the Pope and being contrary to the Christian faith. Charles V. by this edict had given satisfaction again to the legates, who were annoyed at Luther being summoned to Worms. Many doubted whether Luther, after this condemnation of his cause by the Emperor, would venture to present himself in person at Worms. He himself was alarmed, but travelled on.

Meanwhile at Worms disquietude and suspense prevailed on both sides. Hutten from the Castle of Ebernburg sent threatening and angry letters to the Papal legates, who became really anxious lest a blow might be struck from that quarter. Aleander complained that Sickingen now was king in Germany, since he could command a following whenever and as large as he pleased. But in truth he was in no case ready for an attack at that moment. He still reckoned on being able, with his Church sympathies, to remain the Emperor's friend, and was just now on the point of taking a post of military command in his service. Some anxious friends of Luther's were afraid that, according to Papal law, the safe-conduct would not be observed in the case of a condemned heretic. Spalatin himself sent from Worms a second warning to Luther after he had left Frankfort, intimating that he would suffer the fate of Huss.

Meanwhile Glapio, on the other side, no doubt with the knowledge and consent of his imperial master, made one more attempt in a very unexpected manner to influence Luther, or at least to prevent him from going to Worms. He went with the imperial chamberlain, Paul von Armsdorf, to Sickingen and Hutten at the Castle of Ebernburg, spoke of Luther as he had formerly done to Brück, in an unconstrained and friendly manner, and offered to hold a peaceable interview with Luther in Sickingen's presence. Armsdorf at the same time earnestly dissuaded Hutten from his attacks and threats against the legates, and made him the offer of an imperial pension if he would desist. Had Luther agreed to this proposal and gone to the Ebernburg, he could not have reached Worms in time; the safe-conduct promised him would have been no longer valid, and the Emperor would have been free to act against him. Nevertheless Sickingen entered into the proposal. The danger threatening Luther at Worms must have appeared still greater to him, and Luther could then have enjoyed the protection of his castle, which he had offered him before. Martin Butzer, the theologian from Schlettstadt, happened then to be with Sickingen; he had already met Luther at Heidelberg in 1518, had then learned to know him, and had embraced his opinions. He was now commissioned to convey this invitation to him at Oppenheim, which lay on Luther's road.

But Luther continued on his way. He told Butzer that Glapio would be able to speak with him at Worms. To Spalatin he replied, though Huss were burnt, yet the truth was not burnt; he would go to Worms, though there were as many devils there as there were tiles on the roofs of the houses.

On April 16, at ten o'clock in the morning, Luther entered Worms. He sat in an open carriage with his three companions from Wittenberg, clothed in his monk's habit. He was accompanied by a large number of men on horseback, some of whom, like Jonas, had joined him earlier in his journey, others, like some gentlemen belonging to the Elector's court, had ridden out from Worms to receive him. The imperial herald rode on before. The watchman blew a horn from the tower of the cathedral on seeing the procession approach the gate. Thousands streamed hither to see Luther. The gentlemen of the court escorted him into the house of the Knights of St. John, where he lodged with two counsellors of the Elector. As he stepped from his carriage he said, 'God will be with me.' Aleander, writing to Rome, said that he looked around with the eyes of a demon.

Crowds of distinguished men, ecclesiastics and laymen, who were anxious to know him personally, flocked daily to see him.

On the evening of the following day he had to appear before the Diet, which was assembled in the Bishop's palace, the residence of the Emperor, not far from where Luther was lodging. He was conducted thither by side streets, it being impossible to get through the crowds assembled in the main thoroughfare to see him. On his way into the hall where the Diet was assembled, tradition tells us how the famous warrior, George von Frundsberg, clapped him on the shoulder, and said: 'My poor monk! my poor monk! thou art on thy way to make such a stand as I and many of my knights have never done in our toughest battles. If thou art sure of the justice of thy cause, then forward in the name of God, and be of good courage—God will not forsake thee.' The Elector had given Luther as his advocate the lawyer Jerome Schurf, his Wittenberg colleague and friend.

When at length, after waiting two hours, Luther was admitted to the Diet, Eck,[1] the official of the Archbishop of Treves, put to him simply, in the name of the Emperor, two questions, whether he acknowledged the books (pointing to them on a bench beside him) to be his own, and next, whether he would retract their contents or persist in them.

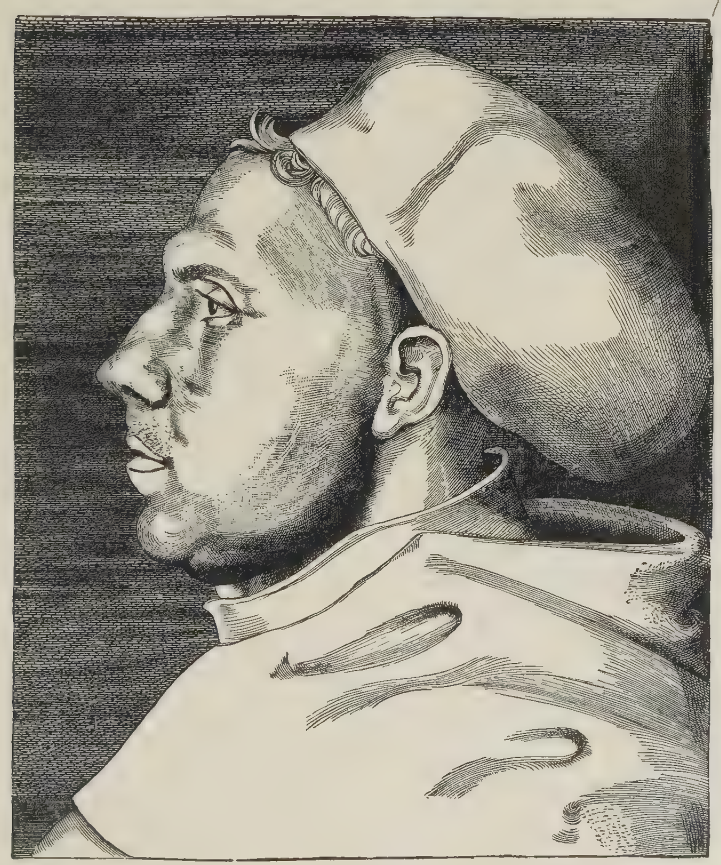

Fig. 25.—Luther. (From an engraving by Cranach, in 1521.)

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[1] This Eck must not be confused with the other John Eck, the theologian.

Schurf here exclaimed, 'Let the titles of the books be named.' Eck then read them out. Among them there were some merely edifying writings, such as 'A Commentary on the Lord's Prayer,' which had never been made the subject of complaint.

Luther was not prepared for this proceeding, and possibly the first sight of the august assembly made him nervous. He answered in a low voice, and as if frightened, that the books were his, but that since the question as to their contents concerned the highest of all things, the Word of God and the salvation of souls, he must beware of giving a rash answer, and must therefore humbly entreat further time for consideration.

After a short deliberation the Emperor instructed Eck to reply that he would, out of his clemency, grant him a respite till the next day.

So Luther had again, on April 18, a Thursday, to appear before the Diet. Again he had to wait two hours, till six o'clock. He stood there in the hall among the dense crowd, talking unconstrained and cheerfully with the ambassador of the Diet, Peutinger, his patron at Augsburg.

After he was called in, Eck began by reproaching him for having wanted time for consideration. He then put the second question to him in a form more befitting and more conformable with the wishes of the members of the Diet: 'Wilt thou defend *all* the books acknowledged by thee to be thine, or recant some part?' Luther now answered with firmness and modesty, in a well-considered speech. He divided his works into three classes. In some of them he had set forth simple evangelical truths, professed alike by friend and foe. Those he could on no account retract. In others he had attacked corrupt laws and doctrines of the Papacy, which no one could deny had miserably vexed and martyred the consciences of Christians, and had tyrannically devoured the property of the German nation; if he were to retract these books, he would make himself a cloak for wickedness and tyranny. In the third class of his books he had written against individuals, who endeavoured to shield that tyranny, and to subvert godly doctrine. Against these he freely confessed that he had been more violent than was befitting. Yet even these writings it was impossible for him to retract, without lending a hand to tyranny and godlessness. But in defence of his books he could only say in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?’ If anyone could do so, let him produce his evidence and confute him from the sacred writings, the Old Testament and the Gospel, and he would be the first to throw his books into the fire. And now, as in the course of his speech he had sounded a new challenge to the Papacy, so he concluded by an earnest warning to Emperor and Empire, lest by endeavouring to promote peace by a condemnation of the Divine Word, they might rather bring a dreadful deluge of evils, and thus give an unhappy and inauspicious beginning to the reign of the noble young Emperor. He said not these things as if the great personages who heard him stood in any need of his admonitions, but because it was a duty that he owed to his native Germany, and he could not neglect to discharge it.

Luther, like Eck, spoke in Latin, and then, by desire, repeated his speech with equal firmness in German. Schurf, who was standing by his side, declared afterwards with pride, ‘how Martin had made this answer with such bravery and modest candour, with eyes upraised to Heaven, that he and everyone was astonished.’

The princes held a short consultation after this harangue. Then Eck, commissioned by the Emperor, sharply reproved him for having spoken impertinently and not really answered the question put to him. He rejected his demand that evidence from Scripture might be brought against him, by declaring that his heresies had already been condemned by the Church, and in particular by the Council of Constance, and such judgments must suffice if anything were to be held settled in Christianity. He promised him, however, if he would retract the offensive articles, that his other writings should be fairly dealt with, and finally demanded a plain answer 'without horns' to the question, whether he intended to adhere to all he had written, or would retract any part of it.

To this Luther replied he would give an answer 'with neither horns nor teeth.' Unless he were refuted by proofs from Scripture, or by evident reason, his conscience bound him to adhere to the Word of God which he had quoted in his defence. Popes and Councils, as was clear, had often erred and contradicted themselves. He could not, therefore, and he would not, retract anything, for it was neither safe nor honest to act against one's conscience.

Eck exchanged only a few more words with him in reply to his assertion that Councils had erred. 'You cannot prove that,' said Eck. 'I will pledge myself to do it,' was Luther's answer. Pressed and threatened by his enemy, he concluded with the famous words: 'Here I stand, I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen.'

The Emperor reluctantly broke up the Diet, at about eight o'clock in the evening. Darkness had meanwhile come on; the hall was lighted with torches, and the audience were in a state of general excitement and agitation. Luther was led out; whereupon an uproar arose among the Germans, who thought that he had been taken prisoner. As he stood among the heated crowd, Duke Erich of Brunswick sent him a silver tankard of Eimbeck beer, after having first drank of it himself.

On reaching his lodging, 'Luther,' to use the words of a Nüremberger present there, 'stretched out his hands, and with a joyful countenance exclaimed, "I am through! I am through!"' Spalatin says: 'He entered the lodging so courageous, comforted and joyful in the Lord, that he said before others and myself, "if he had a thousand heads, he would rather have them all cut off than make one recantation.' He relates also how the Elector Frederick, before his supper, sent for him from Luther's dwelling, took him into his room and expressed to him his astonishment and delight at Luther's speech. 'How excellently did Father Martin speak both in Latin and German before the Emperor and the Orders. He was bold enough, if not too much so.' The Emperor, on the contrary, had been so little impressed by Luther's personality, and had understood so little of it, that he fancied the writings ascribed to him must have been written by some one else. Many of his Spaniards had pursued Luther, as he left the Diet, with hisses and shouts of scorn.

Luther, by refusing thus point-blank to retract, effectually destroyed whatever hopes of mediation or reconciliation had been entertained by the milder and more moderate adherents of the Church who still wished for reform. Nor was any union possible with those who, while looking to a truly representative Council as the best safeguard against the tyranny of a Pope, were anxious also to obtain at such a Council a secure and final settlement of all questions of Christian faith and morals. It was these very Councils about which Eck purposely called on Luther for a declaration; and Luther's words on this point might well have been considered by the Elector as 'too bold.' Aleander, who had used such efforts to prevent Luther's being heard, was now well satisfied with the result. But Luther remained faithful to himself. True it was that he had often formerly spoken of yielding in mere externals, and of the duty of living in love and harmony, and respecting the weaknesses of others; and his conduct during the elaboration of his own Church system will show us how well he knew to accommodate himself to the time, and, where perfection was impossible, to be content with what was imperfect. But the question here was not about externals, or whether a given proceeding were judicious or not for the attainment of an object admittedly good. It was a question of confessing or denying the truth—the highest and holiest truths, as he expressed it, relating to God and the salvation of man. In this matter his conscience was bound.

And the trial thus offered for his endurance was not yet over. On the morning of the 19th, the Emperor sent word to the Estates, that he would now send Luther back in safety to Wittenberg, but treat him as a heretic. The majority insisted on attempting further negotiations with him through a Committee specially appointed. These were conducted accordingly by the Elector of Treves, to whom Frederick the Wise and Miltitz had once been anxious to submit Luther's affair. The friendliness, and the visible interest in his cause, with which Luther now was urged, was more calculated to move him than Eck's behaviour at the Diet. He himself bore witness afterwards how the Archbishop had shown himself more than gracious to him, and would willingly have arranged matters peaceably. Instead of being urged simply to retract all his propositions condemned by the Pope, or his writings directed against the Papacy, he was referred in particular to those articles in which he rejected the decisions of the Council of Constance. He was desired to submit in confidence to a verdict of the Emperor and the Empire, when his books should be submitted to judges beyond suspicion. After that he should at least accept the decision of a future Council, unfettered by any acknowledgment of the previous sentence of the Pope. So freely and independently of the Pope did this Committee of the German Diet, including several bishops and Duke George of Saxony, proceed in negotiating with a Papal heretic. But everything was shipwrecked on Luther's firm reservation that the decision must not be contrary to the Word of God; and on that question his conscience would not allow him to renounce the right of judging for himself. After two days' negotiations, he thus, on April 25, according to Spalatin, declared himself to the Archbishop: 'Most gracious Lord, I cannot yield; it must happen with me as God wills;' and continued: 'I beg of your Grace that you will obtain for me the gracious permission of His Imperial Majesty that I may go home again, for I have now been here for ten days and nothing yet has been effected.' Three hours later the Emperor sent word to Luther that he might return to the place he came from, and should be given a safe-conduct for twenty-one days, but would not be allowed to preach on the way.

Free residence, however, and protection at Wittenberg, in case Luther were condemned by the Empire, was more than even Frederick the Wise would be able to assure him. But he had already laid his plan for the emergency. Spalatin refers to it in these words: 'Now was my most gracious Lord somewhat disheartened; he was certainly fond of Dr. Martin, and was also most unwilling to act against the Word of God, or to bring upon himself the displeasure of the Emperor. Accordingly, he devised means how to get Dr. Martin out of the way for a time, until matters might be quietly settled, and caused Luther also to be informed, the evening before he left Worms, of his scheme for getting him out of the way. At this Dr. Martin, out of deference to his Elector, was submissively content, though, certainly, then and at all times he would much rather have gone courageously to the attack.'

The very next morning, Friday the 26th, Luther departed. The imperial herald went behind him, so as not to attract notice. They took the usual road to Eisenach. At Friedberg Luther dismissed the herald, giving him a letter to the Emperor and the Estates, in which he defended his conduct at Worms, and his refusal to trust in the decision of men, by saying that when God's Word and things eternal were at stake, one's trust and dependence should be placed, not on one man or many men, but on God alone. At Hersfeld, where Abbot Crato, in spite of the ban, received him with all marks of honour, and again at

Eisenach, he preached, notwithstanding the Emperor's prohibition, not daring to let the Word of God be bound. From Eisenach, whilst Swaven, Schurf, and several other of his companions went straight on, he struck southward, together with Amsdorf and Brother Pezensteiner, in order to go and see his relations at Möhra. Here, after spending the night at the house of his uncle Heinz, he preached the next morning, Saturday, May 4. Then, accompanied by some of his relations, he took the road through Schweina, past the Castle of Altenstein, and then across the back of the Thuringian Forest to Waltershausen and Gotha. Towards evening, when near Altenstein, he bade leave of his relations. About half an hour farther on, at a spot where the road enters the wooded heights, and ascending between hills along a brook, leads to an old chapel, which even then was in ruins, and has now quite disappeared, armed horsemen attacked the carriage, ordered it to stop with threats and curses, pulled Luther out of it, and then hurried him away at full speed. Pezensteiner had run away as soon as he saw them approach. Amsdorf and the coachman were allowed to pass on; the former was in the secret, and pretended to be terrified, to avoid any suspicion on the part of his companion. The Wartburg lay to the north, about eight miles distant, and had been the starting-point of the horsemen, as it now was their goal; but precaution made them ride first in an eastern direction with Luther. The coachman afterwards related how Luther in the haste of the flight dropped a grey hat he had worn. And now Luther was given a horse to ride. The night was dark, and about eleven o'clock they arrived at the stately castle, situated above Eisenach. Here he was to be kept as a knight-prisoner. The secret was kept as strictly as possible towards friend and foe. For many weeks afterwards even Frederick's brother John had no idea of it, on the contrary, he wrote to Frederick that Luther, he had heard, was residing at one of Sickingen's castles. Among his friends and followers the terrible news had spread, immediately upon his capture, that he had been made away with by his enemies.

At Worms, however, while the Pope was concluding an alliance with Charles against France, the Papal legate Aleander, by commission of the Emperor, prepared the edict against Luther on the 8th of May. It was not, however, until the 25th, after Frederick, the Elector of the Palatinate, and a great part of the other members of the Diet had already left, that it was deemed advisable to have it communicated to the rest of the Estates; nevertheless it was antedated the 8th, and issued 'by the unanimous advice of the Electors and Estates.' It pronounced upon Luther, applying the customary strong expressions of Papal bulls, the ban and re-ban; no one was to receive him any longer, or feed him &c., but wherever he was found, he was to be seized and handed over to the Emperor.

PART IV.

FROM THE DIET OF WORMS TO THE PEASANTS' WAR AND LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

LUTHER AT THE WARTBURG, TO HIS VISIT TO WITTENBERG IN 1521.

LUTHER, after being brought to the fortress, had to live there as a knight-prisoner. He was called Squire George, he grew a stately beard, and doffed his monk's cowl for the dress of a knight, with a sword at his side. The governor of the castle, Herr von Berlepsch, entertained him with all honour, and he was liberally supplied with food and drink. He was free to go about as he pleased in the apartments of the castle, and was permitted, in the company of a trusty servant, to take rides and walks out of doors. Thus, as he writes to a friend, he sat up aloft, in the region of the birds, as a curious prisoner, *nolens volens*, whether he willed or no; willing, because God would have it so, not willing, because he would far rather have stood up for the Word of God in public, but of such an honour God had not yet found him worthy.

Care was also taken at once that he should be able to correspond at least by letter with his friends, and especially with those at Wittenberg. These letters were sent by messengers of the Elector through the hands of Spalatin. When Luther afterwards heard that a rumour had got abroad as to his place of residence, he sent a letter to Spalatin, in which he said: 'A report, so I hear, is spread that Luther is staying at the Wartburg near Eisenach; the people suppose this to be the case, because I was taken prisoner in the wood below; but while they believe that, I sit here safely

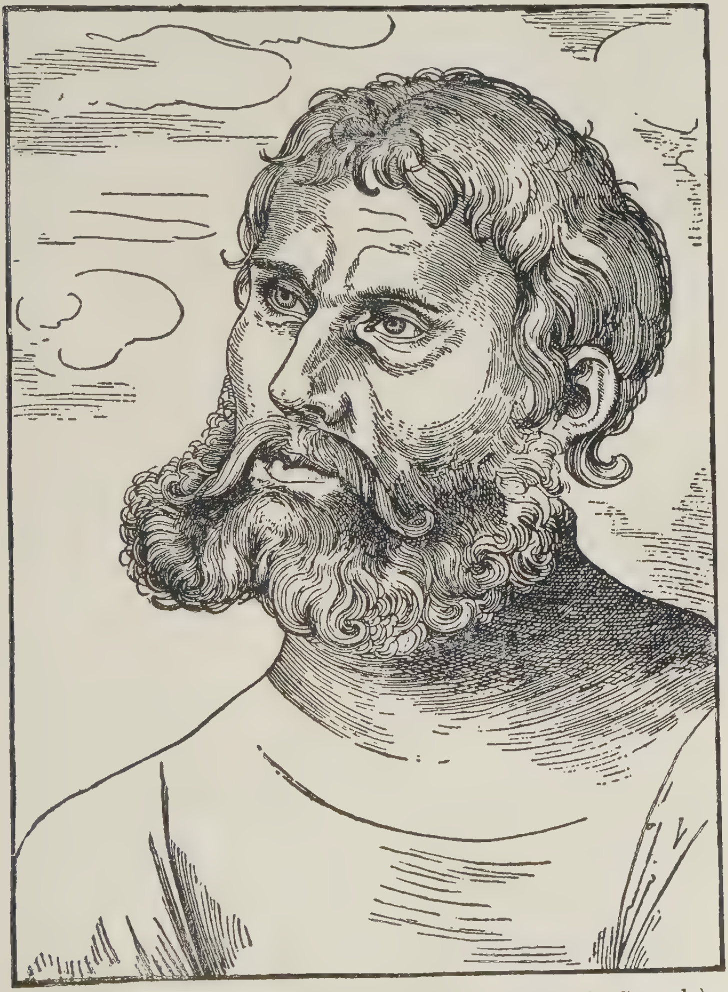

FIG. 26. LUTHER as "Squire George." (From a woodcut by Cranach.)

hidden. If the books that I publish betray me, then I shall change my abode; it is very strange that nobody thinks of Bohemia.' This letter, so Luther thought, Spalatin might let fall into the hands of some of his spying opponents, so as to lead them astray in their conjecture. Spalatin made no use of this naïve attempt at trickery. He could hardly have done much in the matter, and would probably have directed those who saw through the meaning of the letter straight to the Wartburg. He succeeded, however, remarkably well in keeping the spot a secret, even after it was generally guessed and known that Luther was to be found somewhere in Saxony. As late as 1528, Luther's friend Agricola remarks that he had hitherto remained concealed, whilst some even sought to hear of him by questioning of the devil; and more than twenty years later Luther's opponent Cochlæus declares that he was hidden at Alstedt in Thuringia.

There was no imperial power at that time which might have deemed it necessary or expedient to track out the man who had been condemned by the Edict of Worms. The Emperor had left Germany again, and was engaged in a war with France.

In his quiet solitude Luther threw himself again without delay into the work of his calling, so far as he could here perform it. This was the study of Scripture and the active exercise of his own pen in the service of God's Word. He had now more time than before to investigate the meaning of the Bible in its original languages. 'I sit here,' he writes to Spalatin ten days after his arrival, 'the whole day at leisure, and read the Greek and Hebrew Bible.'

His sojourn at the castle began in the festival time between Easter and Whitsuntide. He wrote at once an exposition of the sixty-eighth Psalm, with particular reference to the events of Ascension and Whitsuntide.

For the liberation of the laity from the Papal yoke, he set at once further to work by composing a treatise 'On

Confession, whether the Pope has power to order it.' He commends confession, when a man humbles himself and receives forgiveness of God through the lips of a Christian brother, but he denounces any compulsion in the matter, and warns men against priests who pervert it into a means of increasing their own power. He now expressed his public thanks to Sickingen, and dedicated the book to him—'To the just and firm Francis von Sickingen, my especial lord and patron.' In this dedication he repeats the fears he had long expressed of the judgment that the clergy would bring upon themselves by their hatred of improvement and their obstinacy. 'I have,' he says, 'often offered peace, I have offered them an answer, I have disputed, but all has been of no avail: I have met with no justice, but only with vain malice and violence, nothing more. I have been simply called on to retract, and threatened with every evil if I refused.' Then speaking of the critical moment at which he was obliged to withdraw, 'I can do no more,' he says, 'I am now out of the game. They have now time to change that which cannot, and should not, and will not be tolerated from them any longer. If they refuse to make the change, another will make it for them, without their thanks, one who will not teach like Luther with letters and words, but with deeds. Thank God, the fear and awe of those rogues at Rome is now less than it was.' And again, speaking of Roman insolence: 'They push on blindly ahead—there is no listening or reasoning. Well, I have seen more water-bubbles than even theirs, and once such an outrageous smoke that it managed to blot out the sun, but the smoke never lasted, and the sun still shines. I shall continue to keep the truth bright and expose it, and am as far from fearing my ungracious masters as they are ready to despise me.'

Luther now finished his exposition of the *Magnificat*, which, with loving devotion to the subject, he had intended for Prince John Frederick. He resumed also his work on the Sunday Gospels and Epistles. The first part of it he had already published in Latin. But he gave it now a new, and for the Christian people of Germany, a most important character, by writing in German his comments on these passages of Scripture, including those already dealt with in Latin, which formed the text of the sermon for the day. Thus arose his first collection of sermons, the 'Church-Postills.' By November he had already sent the first part to the press, though the work progressed but slowly. In a simple exposition of the words of the Bible, without any artificial and rhetorical additions or ornament, but with a constant and cheerful regard to practical life, with an unceasing attention to the primary questions of salvation, and in pithy, clear, and thoroughly popular language, he began to lay before his readers the sum total of Christian truth, and impress it on their hearts. The work served as much for the instruction and support of other preachers of the gospel now newly proclaimed, as for the direct teaching and edifying of the members of their flocks. It advanced, however, only by degrees, and Luther after many years was obliged to have it finished by friends, who collected together printed or written copies of his various sermons.

For the special comfort and advice of his Wittenberg congregation Luther wrote an exposition of the thirty-seventh Psalm. Nor with less energy and force did he wield his pen during June, in a vigorous and learned polemical reply in Latin to the Louvain theologian, Latomus.

And yet Luther all this while continued to lament that he had to sit there so idly in his Patmos: he would rather be burnt in the service of God's Word than stagnate there alone. The bodily rest which took the place of his former unwearied activity in the pulpit and the lecturer's chair, together with the sumptuous fare now substituted for the simple diet of the convent, were no doubt the cause of the physical suffering which for a long time had grievously distressed him and put his patience to the test, and which must have weighed upon his spirits. In his distress he once thought of going to Erfurt to consult physicians. Some strong remedies, however, which Spalatin got for him, gave him temporary relief.

He took exercise in the beautiful woods around the castle, and there, as he related afterwards, he used to look for strawberries. In August he had news to give Spalatin of a hunt, at which he had been present two days. He wished to look on at 'this bitter-sweet pleasure of heroes.' 'We have,' he says, 'hunted two hares and a few poor little partridges; truly a worthy occupation for idle people!' But among the nets and hounds he managed, as he says, to pursue theology. He saw in it all a picture of the devil, who by cunning and godless doctrines ensnares poor innocent creatures. Graver thoughts still were suggested to his mind by the fate of a little hare, which he had helped to save, and had rolled up in the long sleeve of his cloak, but which, on his putting it down afterwards and going away, the dogs caught and killed. 'Thus,' he says, 'do the Pope and Satan rage together, to destroy, despite my efforts, souls already saved.'

At that time too he fancied he heard and saw all kinds of devil's noises and sights, which long afterwards he frequently described to his friends, but which he took at the time with great calmness. Such, for instance, were a strange continual rumbling in a chest in which he kept hazel nuts, nightly noises of falling on the stairs, and the unaccountable appearance of a black dog in his bed.

Of the well-known ink-stain at the Wartburg we hear nothing either from those or after-times; and a similar spot was shown in the last century at the Castle of Coburg, where Luther stayed in 1530.

In the outer world, meanwhile, the great movement that emanated from Luther continued to advance and grow, in spite of his disappearance. It was apparent how powerless was his enforced absence to suppress it. Soon too it was to be seen how much on the other hand it depended on him that the movement should not bring real danger and destruction.

At Wittenberg his friends continued labouring faithfully and undisturbed. Much as Melancthon troubled himself about Luther and longed for his return, Luther relied with confidence upon him and his efforts, as rendering his own presence unnecessary. With joyful congratulations to his friend he acknowledged his receipt at the Wartburg of the sheets of his work—the *Loci Communes*—wherein Melancthon, whilst intending at first only to proclaim the fundamental principles and doctrines of the Bible, and especially of the Epistle to the Romans, actually laid the foundation for the dogma of the Evangelical Church.

Just at this time new forces had stepped in to further the work and the battle. Shortly before Luther's departure to Worms, John Bugenhagen of Pomerania had appeared at Wittenberg,—a man only two years younger than Luther, well trained in theology and humanistic learning, and already won over to Luther's doctrines by his writings, and more especially by his work on the Babylonish Captivity. He had made friends with Luther and Melancthon, and soon began to teach with them at the university. John Agricola from Eisleben had already taken part in the biblical lectures at the university, which was then the chief place for the exposition of evangelical doctrine. This man, born in 1494, had lived at Wittenberg since 1516. He had from the first been an adherent of Luther, and had won his confidence, as also that of Melancthon. He was now their fellow-lecturer at the university, and since the spring of 1521 had been appointed by the town as catechist at the parish church, charged with the duty of teaching children religion. Wittenberg had also gained the services of the learned Justus Jonas, so conspicuous for his high culture, and a staunch and open friend of Luther. Shortly after his journey with Luther from Erfurt to the Diet of Worms, he obtained, by grant of the Elector, the office of provost to the church of All Saints at Wittenberg, and became a member also of the theological faculty at the university. The excommunication under which Melancthon had fallen with Luther did not deter the mass of students from their cause. The academical youth who had assembled here from the whole of Germany, and from Switzerland, Poland, and other countries, were renowned for the exemplary unity in which, unlike their brethren in most of the universities in those days, they lived together and devoted themselves to the purest and most elevating studies. Everywhere students might be seen with Bibles in their hands; the young nobles and sons of burghers applied themselves diligently to self-discipline; and the drinking-bouts practised elsewhere, and so destructive to the muses, were unknown among them.

Luther, by his behaviour at Worms in particular, had fastened upon himself the eyes of all Germany. The proceedings before the Diet, made known, as they would be nowadays, by the newspapers, were then published abroad by means of fugitive pamphlets of a longer or shorter kind. Luther's speech in particular was circulated from notes made partly by himself, partly by others. Day after day, and especially during the sittings of the Diet, a number of other short tracts and fly-sheets set forth, mainly in the form of a dialogue, a popular discussion and explanation of his cause. His fate at Worms was immediately proclaimed in a book called 'The Passion of Dr. Martin Luther,' the title of which sufficiently indicated the analogy suggested. Then came the stirring and disquieting news of his sudden kidnapping by the powers of darkness; rumours which only served to stimulate him further in his concealment to speak out and march forwards with undaunted courage and assurance.

As writers who now began to labour for the cause in a similar spirit to Luther's and in a similarly popular style and manner, we must not omit to name the following. First and foremost was Eberlin of Günzburg, formerly a Franciscan at Tübingen; next, the Augustine monk Michael Stifel of Esslingen, who came himself to Wittenberg and joined there the circle of friends; and lastly, the Franciscan Henry von Kettenbach at Ulm. The authors of some other influential works, such as the dialogue 'Neu Karsthans' (Karsthans being a name for peasants), are not known with certainty. In these men and their writings, ideas and thoughts already made their appearance, going beyond the intentions of Luther, and into a territory which, from his standpoint of religion, he would rather have seen more exactly defined, and taking up weapons which he had rejected. Thus 'Karsthans' contains the advice to break off, after the example of the Hussites in Bohemia, from most of the Churches, as being tainted with avarice and superstition; and a rising against the clergy is contemplated, in which the nobles and peasants should combine. Eberlin, with his extraordinary energy, not content with the most comprehensive and far-reaching schemes of ecclesiastical reform, plunged into questions affecting the wants of municipal, social, and political life, which Luther, in his Address to the German Nobility, had only briefly alluded to, and had carefully distinguished from his own particular work in hand. To the dealings of the great merchants he showed himself more hostile even than Luther; and put forward such proposals as the establishment by the civil authorities of a cheaper tariff of prices for provisions, the appointment to magisterial offices by election, for which peasants also should be qualified, and free rights of hunting and fishing.

The Edict of Worms, intended to proscribe and suppress throughout Germany the heretic and his writings, was published in the different states and towns by the princes and magistrates; but the power, and partly also the will, was wanting to enforce its execution. At Erfurt, shortly after Luther's passage through the town upon his way to Worms, the interference of the clergy against a member of a religious institution which had taken part in the ovation accorded to the Reformer, gave the first occasion to violent and repeated tumults. Students and townspeople attacked upwards of sixty houses of the priests, and demolished them. Luther told his friends at once, that he saw in this the work of Satan, who sought by this means to bring contempt and legitimate reproach upon the gospel.

Elsewhere, and above all at Wittenberg, his followers busied themselves in his absence with putting into practice what he had defended with his words. Calmly and with mature deliberation and courage, Luther took part in their labours from the solitude of his watch-tower. He had a very lively and, as he himself confesses, often painful consciousness of his own responsibility, as the one who had put the first match to the great fire, and whose first duties lay with his Wittenberg brethren, as their teacher and pastor.

Shortly after his arrival at the Wartburg, he received the news that Bartholomew Bernhardi of Feldkirchen, provost in the little town of Kemberg near Wittenberg, had publicly, and with the consent of his congregation, taken a wife. He was not the first priest who had ventured to break the unchristian prohibition of marriage by the Romish Church. But he was the most distinguished of such offenders hitherto, besides being a particular disciple of Luther and a man of unimpeachable integrity. Luther wrote about it to Melancthon, saying: 'I admire the newly married man, who in these stormy times has no fears, and has lost no time about it. May God guide him.'

At Wittenberg it was now demanded, not without violence, that monasticism should be abolished, and that the mass and the Lord's Supper should be changed in conformity with the institution of Christ. It seemed as if here, in the place of Luther, who had gone before with the simple testimony of the Word and doctrine, two other men were now to step in as practical and energetic Reformers. One of them was Luther's old colleague, Carlstadt, who had returned in July from a short visit to Copenhagen, whither the King of Denmark had invited him to promote the new evangelical theology at the university, but had soon again dismissed him, and who now assumed the lead at Wittenberg with a passionate and ambitious, but undeterminate zeal. The other was the Augustine monk, Gabriel Zwilling, who had introduced himself to notice as a fiery preacher in the convent church, and in spite of his unattractive appearance and weak voice had drawn together a large congregation from the town and university, and fascinated them with his eloquence. A young Silesian wrote home from the university of Wittenberg about him, saying: 'God has raised up for us another prophet; many call him a second Luther. Melancthon is never absent when he preaches.'

For the clergy Carlstadt sought, by a perverse interpretation of Scripture, to make the married state into a law. Only married men were to be appointed to offices in the Church. For monks and nuns he claimed the liberty of renouncing their cloistered and celibate life, if they found its moral requirements insupportable; but the biblical evidence that he adduced in support of this doctrine was unhappily chosen; and he still declared the renunciation of vows to be a sin, though justified by the avoidance thereby of a still greater sin, that of unchastity in monastic life. Luther had required that at the Lord's Supper the cup, in accordance with the original institution of Christ, should be given to the laity. Carlstadt and Zwilling, however, wished to make it a sin for a person to partake of the Communion without the cup being given to the communicants. Other changes also were now demanded in the mode of administering the elements, conformably with the Holy Supper held by Jesus Himself with His twelve disciples. Zwilling would have twelve communicants at a time partake of the bread and wine. It was further insisted that, like as at ordinary meals, the elements should be given into the hand of each individual to partake of, and not put into his mouth by the priest. The sacrifice of the mass Zwilling would abolish altogether, but Carlstadt thought it necessary, in dealing with so important a feature of the old form of worship, to proceed with caution.

Upon these questions and proceedings Luther expressed his opinion early in August to Melancthon, who was keenly excited about them, but on many points was unsettled in his mind. The project of restoring at Wittenberg the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as originally instituted, with the cup, met with Luther's full approval; for the tyranny which the Christian congregations had hitherto endured in this respect had been acknowledged there, and there was a general wish to resist it. He declared further, with regard to private masses, that he was resolved never to say any more while he lived. But compulsion he would not dream of: if any who still suffered from this tyranny partook of the Communion without the cup, no man durst account it to him as a sin. As for the troubles of the monks and nuns, under their self-imposed vows, his sympathy for them was no less acute than that of his friends at Wittenberg, but the arguments by which they sought to help them to liberty he did not consider sound. He gave now this subject a more searching and deeper consideration, and shortly addressed a series of theses on celibacy to the bishops and deacons of the church at Wittenberg. He attacked vows in general, and assailed them at the very root. Inasmuch, moreover, as the vows of chastity, he said, and of other monastic observances were commonly made to God with the intent and purpose of working out one's own salvation by one's own works and righteousness, these were not vows in accordance with the will of God, but denials of the faith. And even though a man should have made a vow in a spirit of piety, he placed himself at all events, by his own will and act, under a restraint and yoke at variance with the gospel and the liberty which faith in Christ bestows. Luther went still farther, and declared that the chastity enjoined upon the monk was only possible if he possessed the special gift of continence spoken of by St. Paul. How dare a man make a vow to God, which God must first endue him with the power to keep? A man, therefore, in vowing chastity, makes a vow which it is not really possible for him to keep, whilst true chastity is made possible for him by God in the married life which he condemns. These vows, accordingly, are radically vicious and displeasing to God, and cease to be binding on a Christian who has been made free in faith, and has recognised the true will of God.

Personally concerned as Luther was, as an Augustine monk himself, in these questions which he discussed, he treated the liberty, which inwardly he knew himself to possess, as quietly and coolly as possible. On receiving the news from Wittenberg, he wrote to Spalatin, 'Good Heaven! our Wittenbergers will allow even the monks to have wives, but they shall not force me to take one.' And he asks Melancthon jokingly, if he was going to revenge himself upon him for having helped him to get a wife; he would know well enough how to guard against that.

At Wittenberg there was great excitement, particularly on account of the mass. In the Augustinian convent there, the majority of the monks held with Zwilling; they wished to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in strict accordance with the institution of Christ. Their prior, Conrad Held, took the opposite side, and adhered to the ancient usage. Justus Jonas, the provost, expressed his views with equal ardour in the convent church attached to the university, and met with violent opposition from other members of the foundation. A committee, composed of deputies from the university and chapter of canons, from whom the Elector in October demanded a formal opinion on the subject, expressed by their majority the same view, and requested the Elector himself to abolish the abuse of the mass. But Frederick utterly rejected the idea of decreeing on his own authority innovations which would constitute a deviation from the great Christian Catholic Church, more especially as opinions were not agreed on them even at Wittenberg. He would do no more than give free scope and protection to the new testimony of biblical truth, until it should be properly sifted by the Church. In the church of the Augustinian convent, the mass and the Lord's Supper were now both suspended.

Men set to work now in earnest to give effect to the new principles applied to monachism. Thirteen Augustine monks, about a third of the then inmates of the convent at Wittenberg, quitted that convent early in November, and cast away their cowls. Some of them took up at once a civil trade or handicraft. This step increased the growing feeling of hostility to the monks among the students and inhabitants of the town. All kinds of enormities ensued: monks were mocked at in the streets; the convents were threatened; and even the service of the mass was disturbed by rioters who forced their way into the parish church.

Meanwhile Luther went on, in the quietness of his seclusion, to teach the Christian truth about vows and masses, to explain and establish his newly-acquired knowledge and convictions, and to prepare by that means the way of ultimate reform. He composed a tract, in Latin and German, 'On the Abuse of Masses,' and another, in Latin, 'On Monastic Vows.' The latter he dedicated to his father, taking note of his protest against his entering the convent, and telling him with joy that he was now a free man, a monk, and yet no longer a monk. As for his brethren's desertion of the convent, however, he disapproved the manner of it. They could, and should, have parted in peace and amity, not as they did, in a tumult. These two works he completed in November, and sent them to Spalatin, to have them printed at Wittenberg.

In this manner Luther occupied himself from the summer to the winter, continuing all the while his biblical studies and the composition of his Church-Postills. But he was also preparing to deal a heavy blow at the Cardinal Albert. This prelate had abstained as yet, with great caution, from taking any stringent measures to prevent the spread of Lutheran preaching in his diocese. But he was in want of money. To supply this want, he published a work, giving news of a precious relic, which he had placed for view at Halle, his town, and inviting pilgrimages to see it. A multitude of other rich and wondrous relics had been collected there ; not only heaps of bones and entire corpses of saints, with a portion of the body of the patriarch Isaac, but also pieces of the manna, as it had fallen from heaven in the desert, little bits of the burning bush of Moses, jars from the wedding at Cana, and some of the wine into which Jesus there had changed the water, thorns from the Saviour's crown, one of the stones with which Stephen was stoned, and a multitude of other, in all nearly 9,000, relics. Whoever should attend with devotion at the exhibition of these sacred treasures in the Collegiate Church at Halle, and should give a pious alms to the institution, was to receive a 'surpassing' indulgence. The first exhibition of this kind took place about the beginning of September. Albert also had not scrupled to cause one of the priests who wished to marry to be imprisoned, though it was notorious how he himself made up for his celibacy by his loose living.

Luther now, as he wrote to Spalatin on October 7, 1521, could not restrain himself any longer from breaking out, in private and in public, against his 'Idol of indulgences' and his scandalous whoredoms. He took no thought of the fact that his own pious Elector, only a few years before, had arranged a similar, though less showy exhibition of relics at the convent church at Wittenberg, and was thus indirectly assailed by reproaches now no longer deserved. By the end of the month Luther had a pamphlet ready for publication. But an attack of such a kind on a magnate like Albert, the great prince of the Empire, Elector of Mayence, and brother of the Elector of Brandenburg, was not to Frederick's taste, and he informed Luther, through Spalatin, that he forbade it. He would not sanction anything, he said, which might disturb the public peace. Luther told Spalatin, in his reply, that he had never read a more disagreeable letter than Frederick's. 'I will not put up with it,' he indignantly broke out; 'I will rather lose you and the prince himself, and every living being. If I have stood up against the Pope, why should I yield to his creature?' He wished only to show his pamphlet first to Melancthon, and submit a few alterations in it to the judgment of his friend. For this purpose he sent it to Spalatin, requesting him to forward it. Then, on December 1, he wrote a letter to Albert himself. Its tone and contents indicate pretty plainly what the pamphlet itself contained. In clear vigorous German, and without any circumlocution, he submits to the Cardinal his 'humble request,' to abstain from corrupting the poor people, and not to show himself a wolf in bishop's clothing. He must surely know by this time that indulgences were sheer knavery and trickery. He was not to imagine that Luther was dead: Luther would trust cheerfully in God, and carry on a game with the Cardinal of Mayence, of which not many people were yet aware. As for the priests who had wished to marry, he warned the Archbishop that a cry would be raised from the gospel about it; and the bishops would learn that they had better first pluck out the beam from their own eyes, and drive their own mistresses away. Luther concluded by giving him fourteen days for a 'proper' answer; otherwise, when that time expired, he would immediately publish his pamphlet on 'The Idol at Halle.'

All this while, the news from Wittenberg kept Luther in a state of constant anxiety. The distance and the difficulty of correspondence had become quite insupportable. A few days after his letter of December 1, he suddenly re-appeared there among his friends. In secret, and accompanied only by a servant, he had gone thither on horseback in his knight's dress. He stayed there for three days with Amsdorf. Only his most intimate friends were allowed to know of his arrival. His meeting with them again gave him, as he wrote to Spalatin, the keenest pleasure and enjoyment. But it was a bitter sorrow to hear that Spalatin would not look at, or listen to, his pamphlet against Albert, nor his tracts on masses and monastic vows, but had kept them back. What his friends now told him of their efforts and labours he approved of, and he wished them strength from above to persevere. But he had heard already, when on his way, of fresh outrages committed by some of the townspeople and students against the priests and monks, and henceforth he deemed it his nearest duty to warn them publicly against such acts of violence and disorder.

CHAPTER II.

LUTHER'S FURTHER SOJOURN AT THE WARTBURG, AND HIS RETURN TO WITTENBERG, 1522.

In secret, as he had first gone there, Luther returned to the Wartburg, and now set to work with his 'True Admonition for all Christians to abstain from turbulence and rebellion.' He had before his eyes the danger of an insurrection, involving the lives of all the priests and monks who opposed reform, and one in which the common people, in revenge for their many grievances, might fall to laying about them with clubs and flails, as the 'Karsthans' threatened. To the princes, magistrates, and nobles, he had already addressed a demand to put a stop to the corruption of the Church and the tyranny of the Pope. Of the civil authorities and the nobility, he says now that 'they ought to do this, in duty to their ordinary position and power, every prince and lord on his own territory; for what is brought about by the exercise of ordinary power is not to be accounted turbulence.' At the same time, to the masses and to individuals he plainly prohibits a rising by force. Turbulence was the usurpation of justice, and revenge, which God would not suffer, for He said, 'Revenge is Mine.' All turbulence, he said, was wrong, however good might be the cause, and only made bad worse. As for the magistrates, he would not have them kill the priests, as once Moses and Elias had done to the worshippers of idols; they were simply to forbid them from acting contrary to the gospel. Words would do more than was enough with them, so there was no need of hewing and stabbing. We have seen how emphatically Luther expressed himself to the same effect before he went to Worms. The Apostle's words that the Lord should consume the Antichrist with the Spirit of His Mouth, were to be fulfilled, according to Luther, in the words of gospel preaching. It was his own previous experience that had taught him to rely with such lofty confidence on the simple Word; he had done more injury with it alone to the Pope, and the priests and monks, than all the emperors and princes had ever done with all their power. He still looked forward steadfastly to the approach of the Last Day, when Christ by His coming should utterly destroy the Pope, whose iniquity the Word had exposed. As he had done formerly in his treatise on Christian liberty, and had now good reason to do with the Wittenbergers, he exhorts men to a loving and merciful regard to their weaker brethren, whose consciences were still ensnared by the old ordinances respecting fasting and masses. They ought not to be taken unawares, but instructed kindly and, if unable to agree at once, dealt with patiently. 'The wolves,' he says, 'cannot be treated too severely, nor the tender sheep too gently.'

Luther's works on the mass and monastic vows were now actually in print. Cardinal Albert, however, gave the answer demanded by Luther, in a short letter of December 21. He assured him that the subject of his complaint had been removed; that as to himself, he did not deny that he was a miserable sinner, the very filth of the earth, as bad as anyone. Christian chastisement he could well endure; he looked to God for grace and strength, to live according to His will. So abjectly did this magnate quail before the Word, with which Luther threatened to expose his doings. He must no doubt have been ashamed of his traffic in indulgences before all his Humanist friends, and especially Erasmus; and must have expected that the other scandals with which Luther charged him would be laid bare without mercy or regard. At the same time we see in all this, how perfectly free from reproach in this matter of morality must Luther have been, not only in his own conscience, but also in the eyes of Albert. Luther, on receiving this letter, doubted indeed the sincerity of its professions, and even abstained from acknowledging it. But he now finally abandoned, nevertheless, the publication of the pamphlet, intended to expose him, which had hitherto been hindered by the Elector.

But the most important task that Luther now undertook, and in which he persevered with steadfast devotion during his further stay at the Wartburg, was one of a peaceful character, the most beautiful fruit of his seclusion, the noblest gift that he has bequeathed to his countrymen. This was his translation of the Bible—first of the New Testament. 'Our brethren demand it of me,' he wrote to Lange shortly after his return from Wittenberg. And in these words the wish was evidently expressed, or else laid to heart anew. The Bible, it is true, had been translated into German before Luther's time, but in a clumsy idiom that sounded foreign to the people, and not, like Luther's version, from the original text, but from the Latin translation used in the churches. Luther declared that no one could speak German of this outlandish kind, 'but,' he said, 'one has to ask the mother in her home, the children in the street, the common man in the market-place, and look at their mouths to see how they speak, and thence interpret it to oneself, and so make them understand. I have often laboured to do this, but have not always succeeded or hit the meaning.' None the less strictly and faithfully did he seek to adhere to the spirit of the text, and, where necessary, even to the letter. Such an interpretation, he said, required a 'truly devout, faithful, diligent, fearful, Christian, learned, experienced, and practised heart.' Penetrated himself with the substance and spirit of the Scriptures, he understood how to combine in his language, as if by intuition, a dignified tone and a national character. So hard did he work, that he finished the New Testament at the Wartburg in a few months; he then wished to revise it with the help of Melancthon.

Meanwhile, affairs at Wittenberg were assuming so serious an aspect as to make Luther's apprehensions increase from day to day. The question of monastic vows indeed was settled peaceably, and in a manner such as Luther would have desired, by some resolutions (so far as resolutions could settle it), passed by the Augustinian brethren at a chapter held at Wittenberg by Link, the Vicar of the Order. It was there resolved that free permission should be given to leave the convent, but that those who preferred to adhere to the monastic life should remain there in voluntary but strict subordination to their superiors and to the established rules; some of them should be employed in preaching the Word of God, others should contribute by manual labour to the support of the institution. Outside, however, among the people of Wittenberg, Carlstadt, who had shortly before restrained even his own partisans in regard to the question of the mass, and who was neither a regular preacher in the town nor in the possession of any other office, now pressed forward, by his sermons and writings, impetuously in the van, and made hasty strides towards the furtherance of his misty projects of reform. Anticipating a prohibition from the Elector, he celebrated the Lord's Supper at Christmas in the new manner. Even the usual vestments were discarded as idolatrous: Zwilling performed the service in a student's gown. The people were enjoined to eat meat and eggs on fast days; and confession was no longer held before the Communion. Carlstadt went further, and denounced the pictures and images in the churches; it was not enough to desist from worshipping them, nor durst it be hinted that they served as books for the instruction of laymen. God had plainly forbidden them; their proper place was in the fire and not in God's house. Whilst the town-council, at his instance, resolved to have the images removed from the parish church, some of the populace stormed in, tore them down, hewed them to pieces, and burned them.

Luther himself, even with regard to rites and ordinances which he rejected altogether, always counselled moderation and patience towards the weak. He could not believe that the great body of his Wittenberg congregation were already ripe for such changes, or that many conscientious but weaker brethren among them were not in need of tender consideration. People might say that it was only a question of time; well, he did not wish to delay genuine reform for ever, merely to humour the minority. But it was precisely that those members should have proper time allowed them, and every means taken for their instruction and edification, that was to Luther a matter of conscience. External matters, of which the other Reformers made so much, such as eating on fast days, the taking with one's own hands the bread and wine at the Communion, and so forth, he regarded as trifles, the performance or non-performance of which in no way affected the true liberty of the faithful, while grievous wrong was done to the souls of the weaker brethren, if they were compelled to do anything therein against their consciences. 'By acting thus,' he says, 'you have made many consciences miserable; if they had to give an account on their death-beds, or when troubled with temptation, they would not for the life of them know why or how they had offended.' Nay, he accuses a man of corrupting souls, who 'plunges' them carelessly into practices that offend their consciences. 'You wish,' he says, 'to serve God, and you don't know that you are the forerunners of the devil. He has begun by attempting to dishonour the Word; he has set you to work at that bit of folly, so that meanwhile you may forget faith and love.' Thus Luther wrote in a work intended for the Wittenbergers. Even the innovations with regard to pictures and images he numbers among the 'trivial matters which are not worth the sacrifice of faith and love.' Those which represented truly Christian subjects he would preserve at all times, and he valued them highly.

These Wittenberg Reformers, however, with all their desire to assert the higher spiritual character of evangelical Christianity, still remained devotees, in their peculiar 'spirit,' to the externals of worship and, in regard to images, to the letter of the Old Testament law. And yet their conception of the Christian spirit and of Christian revelation produced results of another and still stranger kind. Not only did they repudiate all titles and dignities conferred by the university, on the plea that, in the words of Christ, no man durst call himself Rabbi or master, but Carlstadt and Zwilling now openly expressed their contempt of all human theology and biblical learning. God, they said, has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes; the Spirit from above must enlighten a man. Carlstadt went to simple burghers in their houses, to have passages in the Bible explained to him. He and Zwilling won over to their side the master of the boys' school in the town, and the school was broken up. A new municipal constitution, supported by the magistracy, made strange inroads on the rights of the citizens and the domain of social life; a common chest, containing the revenues of the Church, was utilised for advancing money without interest to needy handicraftsmen, and making loans to other townsmen at a low rate of interest. Meantime the spiritual wants of the community were neglected, and in the hospitals and prisons entirely overlooked.

Such was the direction here taken by the reform for which Luther's preaching had prepared the way. And just at this time, at Christmas, three fanatics came to Wittenberg from Zwickau, with the object of taking part in the movement and furthering the work of God. These were Nicholas Storch, a weaver, Mark Stübner, a former student at Wittenberg, and another weaver, who were now zealously joined by the theologian Martin Cellarius. They boasted of a direct revelation from God, of prophetic visions, dreams, and familiar conversations with the Deity. Compared with these pretensions, Scripture was a thing of small importance in their eyes. They rejected infant baptism, as incapable of imparting the Spirit. For communion and intercourse with God they looked not to faith, which, as Luther taught, accepts submissively what the Word of God reveals to the conscience and the heart, but to a mystic process of self-abstraction from everything external, sensual, and finite, until the soul becomes immovably centred in the one Divine Being. This spirit, seemingly so elevated and pure, broke out nevertheless into fanaticism of the wildest kind, by proclaiming and demanding a general revolution, in which all the priests were to be killed, all godless men destroyed, and the kingdom of God established.

These fanatical displays had begun at Zwickau, no doubt under Bohemian influence, and were characterised by the ravings common to the middle ages. Thomas Münzer, from Stolberg in the Harz country, who was a preacher at one of the churches, took the lead; and he was certainly the most important and most dangerous personage among them. He accounted the civil authorities, with their rights, no more as Christians than he did the clergy and the hierarchy; and began already to prate of universal equality and communism. This novel and exciting doctrine soon won adherents, and propagated the 'spirit of revelation.' Already disturbances were brewing. But the magistrates took vigorous and timely measures. Storch, Stübner, and Cellarius fled to Wittenberg, while Münzer roamed about elsewhere in Germany.

Carlstadt went on with his innovations without allying himself outwardly with these refugees. But the connection of his aims with theirs could not be mistaken, and as time went on, became more and more apparent. Melancthon, with all his refinement and purity of soul, had not sufficient energy and independence to bridle the passions and forces that had been aroused by Carlstadt. The Zwickau prophets, with their visions and revelations, haunted him; he seemed incapable of forming any settled or sober judgment on this strange and sudden phenomenon.

Luther, on the contrary, received the news with calmness and composure. He marvelled at the anxiety of his friend, who in intellect and learning was his superior. He found no difficulty in testing these enthusiasts by the standard of the New Testament. There was nothing, he said, in their words and acts, so far as he had heard anything of them, which the devil might not do or mimic. As for their so-called ecstasies of devotion, there was nothing in all that, even though they boasted of being rapt into the third heaven. The Majesty of God was not wont to hold such familiar converse with men in old time. The creature must first perish before his Creator, as before a consuming fire: when God speaks, he must feel the meaning of the words of Isaiah, 'As a lion, so will he break all my bones.' And yet Luther would not have them imprisoned or dealt with by violence; they could be disposed of without bloodshed and the sword, and be laughed out of their folly.

But his cares for his Wittenberg congregation and the trouble which Carlstadt's doings there were giving him, left him no peace. He could not justify those acts before God and the world: they lay upon his own shoulders, and above all, they brought discredit on the gospel. In January he went back to Wittenberg. He was entreated to do so by the magistrates. In vain did the Elector attempt to detain him, and so prevent his risking an appearance in public. Moreover, the Council of Regency at Nüremberg, which represented the Emperor in his absence, had just demanded of Frederick a strict suppression of the innovations at Wittenberg.

Luther quitted the Wartburg, without leave, on March 1. About his journey thence we only know that he passed through Jena and the town of Borna, lying south of

Leipzig. A young Swiss, John Kessler from St. Gallen, who was then on his way with a companion to the university at Wittenberg, has left us an interesting account of their meeting with Luther at the inn of the 'Black Bear,' just outside Jena. They found there a solitary horseman sitting at the table, 'dressed after the fashion of the country in a red *schlepli* (or slouched hat), plain hose and doublet—he had thrown aside his tabard—with a sword at his side, his right hand resting on the pommel, and the other grasping the hilt.' Before him lay a little book. He invited them in a friendly manner, bashful as they were, to take a seat by him, and spoke to them about the Wittenberg studies, about Melancthon and other men of learning, and as to what people thought of Luther in Switzerland. Discoursing thus, he made them feel so much at ease, that Kessler's companion took up the little book lying before him, and opened it: it was a Hebrew Psalter. At supper, where they were joined by two merchants, he paid for Kessler and his friend, and fascinated them all by his 'agreeable and godly discourse.' Afterwards he drank with his young friends 'one more friendly glass for a blessing,' gave them his hand at parting, and charged them to greet the jurist Schurf at Wittenberg, who was a fellow-countryman of theirs by birth, with the words 'He who is coming, salutes you.' The host had recognised Luther, and told his guests who he was. Early next morning the merchants found him in the stable: he mounted his horse, and rode forward on his way.

At Borna, where he lodged with an official of the Elector, he wrote in haste a long answer to the warning instructions of his prince, conveyed to him by the governor of Eisenach on the eve of his departure. He did not seek to excuse himself, or to beg forgiveness, but to quiet his 'most gracious Highness,' and confirm him in the faith. He had never spoken with greater certainty about what he had to do, nor with a calmer and more joyful, bold, and proud assurance, in view of what lay before him, than now, when he had to encounter, on two contrary sides, opposition and danger. In his resolve and his hopes he threw himself entirely on his God. 'I go to Wittenberg,' he writes to Frederick, 'under a far higher protection than yours. Nay, I hold that I can offer your Highness more protection than your Highness can offer me. . . God alone must be the worker here, without any human care or help; therefore, he who has the most faith will be able to give the most protection.' To the question what the Elector should do in his cause, he answered, 'nothing at all.' The Elector must allow the Imperial authorities to exercise their powers in his territory without let or hindrance, even if they chose to seize him or put him to death. The Elector would surely not be called on to be his executioner. Should he leave the door open and give safe-conduct to those who sought to capture him, he would have done his duty quite enough.

Luther rode on undaunted, even through the territory of Duke George, who was now violently exasperated with him and the people of Wittenberg; and on the evening of March 6 he reached his destination and his friends, safe in body and happy in his mind.

On the morning of the following Saturday, Kessler and his companion, on visiting Schurf, found Luther sitting at his house with Melancthon, Jonas, and Amsdorf, and telling them about his doings. Kessler thus describes his appearance. 'When I saw Martin in 1522, he was somewhat stout, but upright, bending backwards rather than stooping; with a face upturned to heaven; with deep, dark eyes and eyebrows, twinkling and sparkling like stars, so that one could hardly look steadily at them.'

CHAPTER III.

LÜTHER'S RE-APPEARANCE AND FRESH LABOURS AT WITTENBERG, 1522.

It was on a Thursday that Luther arrived again at Wittenberg. The very next Sunday he re-appeared in his old pulpit among his town congregation. In clear, simple, earnest, and Scriptural language he endeavoured to explain to them their errors, and to lead them again into the right way. For eight successive days he preached in this manner. The truths and principles he propounded were the same that he uttered from the Wartburg, and, indeed, ever since his career of reformation began. Above all things he exhorted them to charity, and to deal with their faithful fellow-Christians as God had dealt with them in His love, whereof through faith they were partakers. 'In this, dear friends,' he said, 'you are almost entirely wanting, and not a trace of charity can I see in you, but perceive rather that you have not been thankful to God. I see, indeed, that you can discourse well enough on the doctrines of faith and love which have been preached to you, and no wonder: cannot even a donkey sing his lesson? and should you not then speak and teach the doctrine or the little Word? But the kingdom of God does not consist in talk or words, but in deeds, in works and practice.' He taught them to distinguish between what was obligatory and what was free, between what was to be observed or what was not. Charity must be practised, he said, even in essentials, since no man must compel his brother by force, but must let the Word operate on the hearts of the weak and erring, and pray for them. Whatever is free must be left free, so as not to cause vexation to the weak; but against unchristian tyrants a stand must be made for freedom.

Thus, with the sheer power and fervour of his eloquence, Luther prevailed with his congregation, and soon had the conduct of the Church movement again in his hands. Zwilling allowed himself to be reproved. Carlstadt shrank back silently, though sullenly; Luther earnestly begged him not to publish anything hostile and thus compel him to a battle. In his sermons he refrained from all personal references. Of the recent innovations, only one was retained, the omission from the mass of the words relating to the sacrifice of the Body of Christ by the priests. Luther considered them downright objectionable and unchristian; and important as they were in themselves, they were scarcely noticed by the weak and simple, being uttered in Latin, and in a low voice. The sacrament was again administered to the majority in one kind; and only those who expressly desired it could receive it with the lay-cup at an altar set aside for the purpose. The latter form of celebration, however, soon became the general custom, to the exclusion of the former. As regards the vestments to be worn during service, the taking the elements into one's own hand, and such-like matters, Luther maintained that they were too trifling to make a fuss about, or to be allowed to be a stumbling-block to the weak adherents of the old system. Luther himself returned to live at the convent, resumed his cowl, and observed again the customary ordinance of fasting. It was only after two years, when his frock was quite worn out, and he had a new suit made of some good cloth which the Elector had given him, that he laid aside altogether his monk's dress.

The prophets of Zwickau were away from Wittenberg at the moment when Luther returned there. A few weeks after Stubner and Cellarius appeared before Luther. Their real character and spirit were now fully shown him by the arrogance and violence with which they demanded belief in their superior authority, and by their outburst of rage when he ventured to contradict them. He writes thus to Spalatin: 'I have caught them even in open lying; when they tried to evade me with miserable smooth words, I at last bade them prove their teaching by miracles, of which they boasted against the Scriptures. This they refused, but threatened that I should have to believe them some day. Thereupon I told them that their God could work no miracle against the will of my God. Thus we separated.' They then left the town for ever, without having gained any ground there.

Thus Luther, who was accused by his enemies of subverting all ordinances of the Church, began his practical labours of reform by checking, through the firmness and clearness of his principles, the violence of others, and concentrating all his thoughts on the spiritual welfare of his congregation. The preacher of free and saving faith was the foremost to insist, in the practical conduct of the Church, upon the active exercise of brotherly love in the service of true freedom. The great man of the people opposed himself, regardless of popular favour or dislike, to the current which had now become national. Under the influence of his preaching the Elector could now quietly allow matters in Wittenberg and the neighbourhood to shape their further course in quiet. Nevertheless, he permitted the neighbouring bishops to work against the new doctrines by visitations in his country; he only denied them the assistance of magisterial compulsion and temporal penalties. The truth should make its own way.

Luther, immediately on his return to Wittenberg, was impatient to explain in full to German Christendom his position, without the restraints imposed on his words during his residence at the Wartburg. This he did in a letter to the knight Hartmuth von Kronberg, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, which he intended for publication. The latter, son-in-law to Sickingen, a man of upright, honourable, Christian character, had published a couple of little tracts in Luther's spirit. Luther, by his letter, wished to 'visit him in spirit and make known to him his joy.' He took the opportunity, at the same time, of speaking his mind plainly, both about the contest he had to wage at Wittenberg, and the hostility to the gospel displayed by Romanists in Germany. But harder yet for the faith than the snares of such enemies, appeared to him 'the cunning game' devised by Satan at Wittenberg, to bring reproach upon the gospel. 'Not all my enemies,' he said, 'have hit me as I now am hit by our people, and I must confess that the smoke makes my eyes smart and almost tickles my heart. "Hereby," thought the Evil One, "I will take the heart out of Luther and weary the tough spirit; this attack he will neither understand nor conquer!"' Fearlessly also, and in a manner which would have been impossible to him at the Wartburg, he spoke out against the grievous 'sin at Worms, when the truth of God was so childishly despised, so publicly, defiantly, wilfully condemned;' it was a sin of the whole German nation, because the heads had done this, and no one at the godless Diet had opposed them. He reproached himself with having, in order to please good friends there, and not to appear too obstinate, smothered his feelings and not spoken out his belief with more vigour and decision before the tyrants, however much the unbelieving heathens might have abused him for answering haughtily. Of one of his 'miserable enemies' he says: 'The chief one is the water-bladder N., who defies Heaven with his high stomach, and has renounced the gospel. He would like to devour Christ, as the wolf does a gnat.' This was an unmistakable allusion to Duke George, who, in his bigoted devotion to the Church, was especially excited by the dangerous influences which threatened his country from the neighbouring Wittenberg, and who shortly before had made violent complaints on that account to the Elector Frederick. Indeed, in a copy of this letter, he was mentioned by name. Duke George afterwards demanded satisfaction, but the matter was prolonged without any result. Luther informs Hartmuth of his return to Wittenberg, but adds that he does not know how long he will remain there. He announces to him the portion of his Postills which had just been published, and states that he had made up his mind to translate the Bible into German. This, he said, was necessary for him, for it would show him his mistake in fancying he was a learned man.

Luther now threw himself into his work in all its branches. He resumed his academical lectures as well as the regular preaching in the town church, and he also preached on week days on the different books of the Bible. These sermons he continued when, in the following year, after the death of the old pastor Heins, for whom he had hitherto acted as deputy, his friend Bugenhagen was appointed to the living. He and Bugenhagen remained from now until the latter died, united by personal friendship and common theological views, and laboured faithfully together in the service of their parochial congregation. Bugenhagen, as town pastor, appears as one of the most prominent figures in the history of Wittenberg at this time. Luther assisted him and his congregation with unselfish affection and friendship, and in turn made confidential use of his services as pastor and father-confessor.

During the busy times of Lent and Easter, 1522, Luther had again undertaken duty among the Wittenberg congregation, and immediately after Easter he visited Borna, Altenburg, Zwickau, and Eilenburg, where the people were longing to hear his preaching, and where he exerted himself to have an evangelical preacher appointed. His eyes indeed were chiefly fixed on Zwickau, where he was resolved to counteract finally by his words the consequences of the recent infatuation. According to a report made by a state official, 25,000 people assembled to hear

Luther, who preached from a balcony of the town-hall to the multitude gathered below. At Borna he preached immediately before a visitation held there by the Bishop of Merseburg, and again on the day after it. During the following autumn he also preached several times at Weimar, whither he had been invited by John, the brother of the Elector Frederick; and likewise before the congregation at Erfurt, to whom during the summer he had addressed an instructive exhortation in writing on the subject of the innovations.

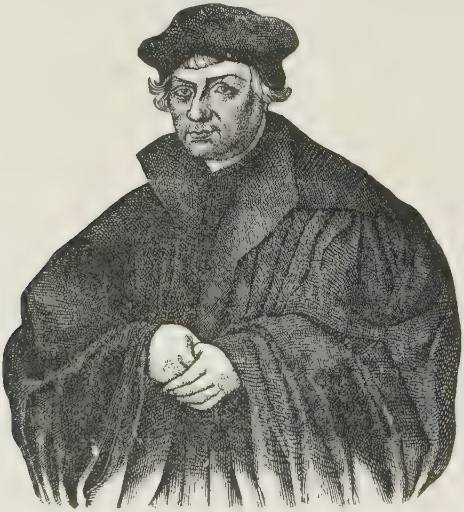

FIG. 27. - BUGENHAGEN.
From a picture by Cranach in his album, (at Berlin,) 1543.

Even at Wittenberg his literary labours, as we have seen from his letter to Kronberg, were still mainly devoted to the Bible. In concert with Melancthon, and with the assistance of other friends, he set about a revision of his translation of the New Testament. He sent the first sheets when printed to Spalatin, on May 10, as a 'foretaste of our new Bible.' With the aid of three presses the printing progressed so rapidly, that already in September the work was ready for publication. September 21, dedicated to St. Matthew, is distinguished as the birthday of the German New Testament. In December already a second edition was called for, though the price of the book, a florin and a half, was a high one at that time.

The work was greedily and thankfully pounced upon by many thousands in all parts of Germany, who had learnt from Luther to distinguish the 'pure Word of God' from the dogmas of the Church, and to honour it accordingly. Nor could any means more powerful than this be found of spreading the doctrine thus founded on the Word of God, and making it the real property of hearers and readers. All the greater was the danger recognised herein by those who adhered to ecclesiastical authority and traditions. Of great significance for both sides are the words of one of the most violent of Luther's contemporary opponents, the theologian Cochlæus: 'Luther's New Testament was multiplied by the printers in a most wonderful degree, so that even shoemakers and women, and every and any lay person acquainted with ehe German type, read it greedily as the fountain of all truth, and by repeatedly reading it, impressed it on their memory. By this means they acquired in a few months so much knowledge, that they ventured to dispute, not only with Catholic laymen, but even with masters and doctors of theology, about faith and the gospel. Luther himself, indeed, had long before taught that even Christian women, and everyone who had been baptized, were in truth priests, as much as pope, bishop, and priests. The crowd of Lutherans gave themselves far more trouble in learning the translation of the Bible than did the Catholics, where the laity left such matters chiefly to the priests and monks.' The Catholic authorities immediately issued orders forbidding the book, and directing it to be delivered up and confiscated. They hastened also to accuse the translation of a number of pretended errors and falsifications, which were mostly corrections of passages mistranslated in the established Latin version from the words of the original Greek text. Cochlæus brought one particular charge against Luther's translation, that he had ventured to alter the beginning of the Lord's Prayer in contradiction to the Universal, including the German Church, and likewise to the original text, by substituting 'Unser Vater in dem Himmel' for 'Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel.' ('Our Father in Heaven,' for 'Our Father which art in Heaven'). When, some years later, Emser published a rival translation of the New Testament, it was found to be in great part a transcript of Luther's, with only a few corrections according to the old Latin.

Whilst the New Testament was still in the press, Luther set zealously to work on the Old. Here he encountered more difficulties, on account of the language; but he had long been studying Hebrew with devotion and zeal, and moreover he could now get the assistance of his new colleague, Aurogallus, who was especially famous for teaching Hebrew. Before Christmas the five Books of Moses were ready for press; these were to be published by themselves. In 1524 they were followed by two other parts, containing the biblical books (according to the present German order) up to the Song of Solomon. His translation of the prophets, interrupted by other work, was delayed for several years.

Nor was Luther's sharp pen long idle against Rome, as indeed might have been anticipated from his letter to Kronberg. He found his chief occasion for attack in a series of new edicts and other measures of the German bishops against the innovations—the abolition of clerical celibacy, the transgression of the laws of fasting, and so on. For this purpose ecclesiastical visitations were undertaken by the Bishops of Meissen and Merseburg, such as have already been alluded to when Luther went to Zwickau.

Luther's sermons against the abuse of Christian liberty were followed by a small tract entitled 'On the necessity of avoiding human doctrine.' He did not mean it, as he said, for those 'bold, intemperate heads;' but he wished to preach Christian liberty to the poor, humble consciences, enslaved by monkish vows and ordinances, that they might be instructed how, by God's help and without danger, to escape and to use their liberty discreetly. Against the existing Romish episcopacy he declared war to the knife in a treatise 'Against the Order, falsely called Spiritual, of Pope and Bishops.' He who had been robbed of his title of priest and doctor by the displeasure of Pope and Emperor, and from whom, by Papal bulls, the 'mark of the beast' (Rev. xiii. 16) was washed off, confronts the 'popish bishops' now, as 'by God's grace, preacher at Wittenberg.'

Luther's further writings against the Romish Churchdom and dogma do not possess the same interest for us as his earlier ones, inasmuch as they no longer show the progress and development of his own views on the Church. In the violent language he now employs he vents his chief anger in complaining that he, and the truth he represented, 'had been condemned unheard—an unexampled proceeding—unrefuted, and in headlong and criminal haste.'

With reference to the attack he had made on the 'episcopal masqueraders' in the tract above mentioned, Luther remarked in a letter to Spalatin on July 26 that he had purposely been so sharp in it, because he saw how vainly he had humbled himself, yielded, prayed and complained. And he added that he would just as little flatter the King of England.

King Henry VIII., who later on, for other reasons, broke so entirely with the Church of Rome and began reforms after his own fashion, had at that time gained for himself from the Pope the title of 'Defender of the Faith,' on account of a learned scholastic treatise against Luther's

'Babylonish Captivity.' This treatise had made such a stir, that Luther thought it expedient to answer it in one of his own. The latter, originally written in Latin, gives a carefully considered explanation of the points of doctrine at issue, and proceeds to prove the propositions he had previously advanced. He points out fundamental, and, indeed, irreconcilable variance between his principles and those of the King, by showing how he, Luther, fought for freedom and established it, while the King, on the contrary, took up the cudgels for captivity, without even attempting to justify it by argument, but simply kept talking of what it consists of, and how people must be content to remain in it. In fact, the whole book was a mere reiteration of the dogmas of ecclesiastical authorities, of the Councils, and of tradition, always taking it for granted that these dare not be disputed. 'I do not need,' says Luther, 'the King to teach me this.' But the personal tone adopted by Luther against Henry went beyond anything that his expressions to Spalatin might have led one to expect, and was even more marked in a German edition of his treatise, which he published after the royal one had been translated into German. The King had, moreover, set the example of abuse, as coarse and defiant as that of his opponent. Luther did not shrink from an incidental remark at the expense of other princes. 'King Henry,' he says, 'must help to prove the truth of the proverb, that there are no greater fools than kings and princes.'

But the most important among the works which Luther was now led to undertake by his opposition to the Romish Church and her teaching, and by her hostile proceedings against himself, was a treatise on the secular power, which he began in December, as soon as he had finished the translation of the five Books of Moses. It appeared under the title of 'On the Secular Power, and how far obedience is due to it.'

How far obedience is due to it? This was the question provoked by the commands and threats of punishment with which Catholic princes were now endeavouring to aid the spiritual power in suppressing the gospel, the writings on reform, and especially the new translation of the Bible. The question was, how far a Christian was bound to obey.

Nor had Luther to step forward less decisively as the champion of the rights, the Divine authority, and the dignity of the civil power, against the pretensions of the Catholic Church. Words of Jesus such as these lay before him: 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' How could these words be reconciled with the fact that the secular arm resisted wrong with force, and raised the sword against the evil-doer? The Church of the middle ages and the School theology maintained that these words were not general moral commands for all Christians, but merely advice for those among them who wished to attain a higher degree of perfection. Hereby the whole civil government with its authorities was assigned a lower grade of ordinary morality, whilst higher morality or true perfection was to be represented in the priestly office and monasticism. On the other hand, friends of Luther, ere now, while taking note that Christ had spoken these words direct to all his disciples, and therefore to all Christians, had been troubled to know how to establish, with regard to Christians, the rights and duties of temporal power.

With respect to this second point in particular Luther now gives his explanation. Those words of Christ were unquestionably commands for all Christians. They demand of every Christian that he should never on his own account grasp the sword and employ force; and if only the world were full of good Christians there would be no need of the sword of secular authority. But it is necessary to wield it against evil for the general welfare, to punish sin and to preserve the peace; and therefore the true Christian, in order thereby to serve his neighbour, must willingly submit to the rule of this sword, and, if God assigns him an office, must wield this sword himself. This command of Scripture is confirmed by other passages, as for instance by the words of the Apostle: 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. For he is the minister of God to thee for good . . . for he beareth not the sword in vain.' (Romans xiii.). Luther thus ranks the vocation of civil government together with the other vocations of moral life in the world. They are all, he said, instituted by God, and all of them, no less than the so-called priestly office, are intended and able to serve God and one's neighbour. These were ideas which laid the foundation for a new Christian estimate of political, civic, and temporal life in general. Thus, later on, the Augsburg Confession rejected the doctrine that to attain evangelical perfection, a man must renounce his worldly calling, as also the theory of the Anabaptists, who would allow no Christian to hold civil office or to wield the sword.

But Luther, while thus determining the province of secular authority, took care to impose limits on its jurisdiction, and to guard against those limits being invaded. The true spiritual government, as instituted by Christ, was intended to make men good, by working upon the soul by the Word, in the power of the Spirit. The temporal government, whose duty it was to secure external peace and order, and to protect men against evil-doers, extends only to 'what is external upon earth,'—over person and property. 'For God cannot and will not allow anyone but Himself alone to rule the soul.'—'No one can or shall force another to believe.'—'True is the proverb: "Thoughts are free of taxes."' We must 'obey God rather than man,' as St. Peter says: these words impose a limit on temporal power. Luther is aware of the objection, that the temporal power does not force a man to believe, but only outwardly guards against heretics, to prevent them from leading the people astray with false doctrines. But he answers: 'Such an office belongs to bishops, and not to princes. God's Word must here contend for mastery. Heresy is something spiritual, that cannot be hewn with steel nor burned with fire.' And among these invasions of the province and office of the Word, Luther includes the edict to confiscate books. Herein must subjects obey God rather than such tyrannical princes. They are to leave the exercise of outward power, even in this matter, to the civil authorities, they must never venture to oppose them by force; they must suffer it, if men invade their houses, and take away their books or property. But if they attempt to rob them of their Bible, they must not surrender a page or a letter.

These are the most powerful and comprehensive utterances which we possess from the mouth of the Reformer, about the demarcation of these provinces of authority, the independent operation of the Word and the Spirit, and liberty of conscience. It is doubtful, indeed, how far they are consonant with those measures which he afterwards found admissible and advisable for the protection of evangelical communities and evangelical truth against those who attempted to lead them astray.

Amidst such active labours the year of Luther's return to Wittenberg passed away.

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER AND HIS ANTI-CATHOLIC WORK OF REFORMATION, UP TO 1525

Luther, as we have seen, was able to prosecute his labours at Wittenberg, undisturbed by the act of the Diet. In other parts of Germany as well, the imperial power left wide scope for the spread of his teaching. At the next approaching Diet at Nüremberg no majority could be looked for again, to give effect to the consequences demanded by the Edict of Worms. Any such expectation was the more futile, from the results, already experienced, of Luther's reappearance in public.

The new Pope, Hadrian VI., whilst adhering strictly to the doctrines of mediæval Scholasticism and of Church authority, nevertheless, by his honest avowal of ecclesiastical abuses, and the firmness and earnestness of his personal character, led men to expect a new era of energetic reform for the Romish Church, at least in regard to the discipline of the clergy and monks, and to a conscientious restraint of Church ordinances, so that even men like Erasmus might rest content. And yet, he was the very one who sought now to stamp out with all severity the Lutheran heresy and its innovations. With this object he broke out into low abuse and slander against Luther personally, as a drunkard and a debauchee. Libels of this kind were perpetually repeated by the Romanists, and no doubt Hadrian believed them, though Luther did not trouble himself much about such personal attacks, but in his letters to Spalatin, simply called the Pope an ass.

Hadrian also, like so many Romish Churchmen after him, was extremely zealous to impress upon princes that he who despises the sacred decrees and the heads of the Church, would cease to respect a temporal throne.

But the Diet which assembled at Nüremberg in the winter of 1522–23, replied to the demands of the Pope by renewing the old grievances of the German nation, and insisting on a free Christian Council, to be held in Germany.

Nor did even an unfortunate military enterprise, undertaken at this time against the Archbishop of Treves by Sickingen, who, while fighting for his own power and the interests of the German nobles, announced his wish also to break road for the Gospel, produce those disastrous results for the evangelical cause in Germany which its enemies had anticipated and hoped for. Sickingen, indeed, after being defeated by the superior forces of the allied princes, died of the wounds he received, but it was as clear as noonday that Frederick the Wise and his evangelical theologians had had nothing to do with his act of violence. Luther, on hearing of Sickingen's enterprise, remarked that it would be 'a very bad business,' and added, on learning the issue, 'God is a just, but a marvellous judge.'

The next meeting of the Diet, from whom, after Hadrian's early death, his successor, Clement VII.—another modern Pope of Leo's way of thinking—demanded anew the execution of the Edict of Worms, resulted in the imperial decree of April 18, 1524. By this, the states of the Empire agreed to execute that edict 'as far as possible,' but stipulated that the Lutheran and the other new doctrines should first be 'examined with the utmost diligence,' and, together with the grievances presented by the princes against the Pope and the hierarchy, should be made the subject of a representation to the Council now demanded. But the inconsistency that lurked in this decree caught Luther's eye and aroused his suspicion. It was scandalous, he declared in a paper upon it, that the Emperor and the princes should issue 'contradictory orders.' They were going to deal with him according to the Edict of Worms, and proclaim him a condemned man, and persecute him, and at the same moment wait to decide what was good or bad in his doctrines. But the decree was, in fact, a subterfuge, by which they resigned the idea of executing that edict. The Lord's Supper could be celebrated at Nüremberg in the new way before the eyes of the whole Diet. Well might Frederick the Wise hope that men would still, at least in Germany, come gradually to agree in peace about the truth contained in Luther's preaching.

The absent Emperor, indeed, remained insensible to all such influences. In the Netherlands strict penal laws were in force. In a letter addressed to the German Empire he condemned the decree of Nüremberg, and, like Hadrian, compared Luther to Mahomet. Further, a minority of the German princes, including, in particular, Ferdinand of Austria, and the Dukes William and Louis of Bavaria, entered into a league at Ratisbon to execute the Edict of Worms, while agreeing to certain reforms in the Church, according to a Papal scheme proposed by his nuncio Campeggio. They too began to persecute and punish the heretics.

Thus, then, the seed sown by Luther began to germinate throughout the whole of Germany. The number of Lutheran preachers increased, and requests were made in many places for their services. Even Cochlæus had to confess that, however bad were their ultimate objects, they showed a remarkable unselfishness and industry in their calling, and that they avoided even the appearance of pushing themselves forward in an irregular and arbitrary manner, waiting rather for their appointment in due course by the nobles or the various congregations. Among the treatises and other writings on ecclesiastical and religious questions which inundated Germany at that time, at least ten were written on the Lutheran, to one on the Romish side. The complaint was that there were not more numerous and better qualified printers for the work.

Among the nobles who espoused the cause of Luther, the support of Albert of Mansfeld, one of the Counts of Luther's native place, was particularly grateful. It was mainly by the nobles that the movement was represented in Austria.

But the gospel gained most ground in German towns, especially among the burgher class in the free cities of the Empire. Preachers were invited hither, where none already existed, and the mass was publicly abolished. This took place during 1523 and 1524 at Magdeburg, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Schwäbish Hall, Nüremberg, Ulm, Strasburg, Breslau, and Bremen. On Saxon territory also, Lutheran congregations were formed in various towns, such as Zwickau, Altenburg, and Eisenach. In many cases Luther's personal friends took part in the movement, and thus cemented more closely their friendship with the Reformer. He had already some trusted fellow-labourers at Nüremberg. At Magdeburg his friend Amsdorf was pastor. Hess, the first evangelical pastor of Breslau, had formed some years earlier a warm friendship with him and Melancthon. Link, his old friend, and the successor of Staupitz as Vicar-General of the Augustines, held office as a preacher at Altenburg, whence he was recalled, for the same purpose, in 1525, to Nüremberg, his former place of residence. Wherever Luther heard of evangelical communities who seemed to need especial help for their strengthening or consolation under trouble, he addressed to them letters, which were afterwards circulated in print. These were sent, for instance, to Esslingen, Augsburg, Worms; also to his 'beloved friends in Christ' at Wittenberg, who had been harassed by the Romanists, and whose cause he pleaded to the Archbishop Albert. With particular joy he sent greetings to the 'chosen and dear friends in God' in the distant towns of Riga, Reval, and Dorpat; and he sent them also an exposition of the 127th Psalm.

The Word, rejected and condemned as it had been by bishops and priests in Germany, met with singular success beyond the eastern boundary of the Empire, among the Order of Teutonic Knights in Prussia. The Grand Master of the Order, Albert of Brandenburg, brother of the Elector of Brandenburg, and cousin of Albert, the Archbishop and Cardinal, had kept up communication with Luther, both orally and by letter, and had been advised by him and Melancthon to make himself familiar with the gospel and the principles of the Evangelical Church. And, above all, there were here two bishops who espoused the new teaching, and who were anxious to tend the flocks committed to their charge as true evangelical bishops or overseers, in the sense insisted on by Luther, and particularly to minister to the Word by preaching and by the care of souls. These were George of Polenz, Bishop of Samland since 1523, and Erhard of Queiss, Bishop of Pomerania since 1524. The members of the Order, almost without exception, were on their side: they resolved to establish a temporal princedom in Prussia and to renounce their vows of 'false chastity and spirituality.' The King of Poland, under whose suzerainty the country had long been, solemnly invested the hitherto Grand Master on April 10, 1525, as hereditary Duke of Prussia. Thus Prussia became the first territory that collectively embraced the Reformation, whilst as yet, even in the Electorate of Saxony, no general measures had been taken in its support. It became, in short, the first Protestant country. Luther wrote to the new Duke: 'I am greatly rejoiced that Almighty God has so graciously and wondrously helped your princely Grace to attain such an eminent position, and further my wish is that the same merciful God may continue His blessing to your Grace through life, for the benefit and godly welfare of the whole country.' And to the Archbishop Albert he held the new Duke up as a shining example, in saying of him, 'How graciously has God sent such a change, as, ten years ago, could not have been hoped for or believed in, even had ten Isaiahs and Pauls announced it. But because he gave room and honour to the gospel, the gospel in return has given him far more room and honour—more than he could have dared to wish for.'

The gospel now received its first testimony in blood. With joyful confidence Luther beheld what God had done, but could not refrain from lamenting, with sorrowful humility, that he himself had not been found worthy of martyrdom. In the Imperial hereditary lands, where for some years missionaries, chiefly members of Luther's own Augustine Order, had been actively labouring in the strength of the convictions derived from Wittenberg, two young Augustine monks, Henry Voes and John Esch, were publicly burnt, on July 1, 1523, as heretics. Luther thereupon addressed a letter to 'the beloved Christians in Holland, Brabant, and Flanders,' praising God for His wondrous light, that He had caused again to dawn. He spoke out even stronger in some verses in which he celebrated the young martyrs; they were published no doubt originally as a broadsheet:

A new song will we raise to Him
Who ruleth, God our Lord;
And we will sing what God hath done,
In honour of His Word.
At Brussels in the Netherlands,
It was through two young lads,
He hath made known His Wonders, &c.

They conclude as follows:—

So let us thank our God to see
His Word returned at last.
The Summer now is at the door,
The Winter is forepast,
The tender flowerets bloom anew,

And He, who hath begun,
Will give His work a happy end.

. . . .

He was, later on, deeply grieved by the death of his brother-Augustine and friend Henry Moller of Zütphen, who, after having been forced to fly from the Netherlands, had begun a blessed work at Bremen, and was now murdered in the most brutal manner on December 11, 1524, by a mob instigated by monks, near Meldorf, whither he had gone in response to an invitation from some of his companions in the faith. Luther informed his Christian brethren in a circular of the end of this 'blessed brother' and 'Evangelist.' He mentions, with him, the two martyrs of Brussels, as well as other disciples of the new doctrine; one Caspar Tauber, who was executed at Vienna, a bookseller named Georg, who was burnt at Pesth, and one who had been recently burnt at Prague. 'These and such as these,' he adds, 'are they whose blood will drown the popedom, together with its god, the devil.'

With regard to his work of reformation, which had now spread so widely and found so many coadjutors, Luther at present thought as little about the outward constitution of a new Church as he had thought about any outward organisation of the war itself, or an external alliance of his adherents, or of a cleverly devised propaganda. Just as here the simple Word was to achieve the victory, so his whole efforts were devoted solely to restoring to the congregations the possession and enjoyment of that Word in all its purity, that they might gather round it, and be thereby further edified, sustained, and guided.

Wherever this privilege was denied to Christians, Luther claimed for them the right, by virtue of their universal priesthood, to ordain a priest for themselves, and to reject the ensnaring deceits of mere human doctrine. He declared himself to this effect, in a treatise written in 1523, and intended in the first instance for the Bohemians—that is to say, for the so-called Utraquists who were then the leading party in Bohemia. These sectaries, whose only ground of estrangement from Rome was the question of administering the cup to the laity, and who had never thought of separating themselves from the so-called Apostolical succession of the episcopate in the Catholic Church, Luther then hoped, albeit in vain, to win over to a genuine evangelical belief and practice of religion. In this treatise he went a step beyond the election of pastors by their congregations, by maintaining that a whole district, composed of such evangelical communities, might appoint their own overseer, who should exercise control over them, until the final establishment of a supreme bishopric, of an evangelical character, for the entire national Church. But of any such ecclesiastical edifice for Germany, wholly absorbed as he was in her immediate needs, he had not yet said a word. Congregations of such a kind, and suitable for such a purpose, could only be created by preaching the Word; nor had Luther yet abandoned the hope that the existing German episcopate, as already had been the case in Prussia, would accept an evangelical reconstruction on a much larger scale. With regard to individual congregations, moreover, it was the opinion of Luther and his friends that, where the local magistrates and patrons of the Church were inclined to the gospel, the appointment of pastors might be made by them in a regular way. A separation of civil communities, each represented by their own magistrate, from the ecclesiastical or religious units, was an idea wholly foreign to that time.

That the word of God should be preached to the various congregations in a pure and earnest manner, that those congregations themselves should be entrusted with the work, should make it their own, and, in reliance thereon, should lift up their hearts to God with prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, –this was the fixed object which Luther held in view in all the regulations which he made at

Wittenberg, and wished to institute in other places. In this spirit he advanced cautiously and by degrees in the changes introduced in public worship,—changes which, as he admits, he had commenced with fear and hesitation. 'That the Word itself,' he says, 'should advance mightily among Christians, is shown by the whole of Scripture, and Christ Himself says (Luke x.) that "one thing is needful," namely, that Mary should sit at the feet of Christ, and hear His Word daily. His Word endures for ever, and all else must melt away before it, however much Martha may have to do.' He points out as one of the great abuses of the old system of worship, that the people had to keep silence about the Word, while all the time they had to accept unchristian fables and falsehoods in what was read, and sung, and preached in the churches, and to perform public worship as a work which should entitle them to the grace of God. He now set vigorously about separating the mere furniture of worship. As to the Word itself, on the contrary, he was anxious to have it preached to the congregation, wherever possible, every Sunday morning and evening, and on week-days, at least to the students and others, who desired to hear it: this was actually done at Wittenberg. Innovations, not apparently required by his principles, he shunned himself, and warned others to do so likewise. Nor was he less diligent to guard against the danger of having the new forms of worship, now practised at Wittenberg, made into a law for all evangelical brethren without distinction. He gave an account and estimate of them in the form of a letter to his friend Hausmann, the priest at Zwickau, 'conjuring' his readers 'from his very heart, for Christ's sake,' that if anyone saw plainly a better way in these matters, he should make it known. No one, he declared, durst condemn or despise different forms practised by others. Outward customs and ceremonies were, indeed, indispensable, but they served as little to commend us to God, as meat or drink (1 Cor. viii. 8) served to make us well pleasing before Him.

In order to enable the congregations themselves to take an active part in the service, he now longed for genuine Church hymns, that is to say, songs composed in the noble popular language, verse, and melody. He invited friends to paraphrase the Psalms for this purpose; he had not sufficient confidence in himself for the work. And yet he was the first to attempt it. With fresh impulse and with the exuberance of true poetical genius, his verses on the Brussels martyrs had flowed forth spontaneously from his inmost soul. They were the first, so far as we know, that Luther had ever written, though he was now forty years of age. With the same poetic impulse he composed, probably shortly after, a hymn in praise of the 'highest blessing' that God had shown towards us in the sacrifice of His beloved Son.

Rejoice ye now, dear Christians all,
And let us leap for joy,
And dare with trustful, loving hearts,
Our praises to employ,
And sing what God hath shown to man,
His sweet and wondrous deed,
And tell how dearly He hath won. etc.

. . . .

The full tone of a powerful, fresh, often uncouth, but very tender popular ballad no other writer of the time displayed like Luther. And whilst seeking to compose or re-arrange hymns for congregational use in church, he now busied himself with the Psalter, paraphrasing its contents in an evangelical spirit and in German metre.

Thus now, early in 1524, there appeared at Wittenberg the first German hymn-book, consisting at first, of only eight hymns, about half of them, such as that beginning *Nun freut euch*, being original compositions of Luther, and three others adapted from the Psalms. In the course of the same year he brought out a further collection of twenty hymns, written by himself for the evangelical congregation there: among these is the one on the Brussels martyrs. It was, in fact, the year in which German hymnody was born. Luther soon found the coadjutors he had wished for.

These twenty-four hymns by Luther were followed in after years by only twelve more from his own pen, among the latter being his grand hymn, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, written probably in 1527. Of these later compositions, comparatively few expressed entirely his own ideas; most of them had reference to subjects already in the possession and use of the Christian world, and of German Christians in particular; that is to say, some referred to the Psalms and other portions of the Bible, others to parts of the Catechism, others again to short German ballads, sung by the people, and even to old Latin hymns. In all of them he was governed by a strict regard to what was both purely evangelical, and also suitable for the common worship of God. And yet they differ widely, one from another, in the poetical form and manner in which he now gives utterance to the longings of the heart for God, now seeks to clothe in verse suited for congregational singing words of belief and doctrine, now keeps closely to his immediate subject, now vents his emotions freely in Christian sentiments and poetical form, as for example in *Ein' feste Burg*, the most sublime and powerful production of them all.

The new hymns went forth in town and country, in churches and homes, throughout the land. Often, far more than any sermons could have done, they brought home to ears and hearts the Word of evangelical truth. They became weapons of war, as well as means of edification and comfort.

In his preface to a small collection of songs, which Luther had published in the same year, he remarks: 'I am not of opinion that the gospel should be employed to strike down and destroy all the arts, as certain high ecclesiastics would have it. I would rather that all the arts, and especially music, should be employed in the service of Him who has created them and given them to man.' What he says here about music and poetry, he applied equally to all departments of knowledge. He saw art and learning now menaced by wrong-minded enthusiasts. For this reason he was particularly anxious that they should be cultivated in the schools.

With great zeal he directed his counsels to the general duty of caring for the good education and instruction of the young, as indeed he had done some time before in his address to the German Nobility. These, above all, he said, must be rescued from the clutches of Satan. He had again in his mind schools for girls. Thus in 1523 he recommended the conversion of the cloisters of the Mendicant Orders into schools 'for boys and girls.' The same advice was offered by Eberlin, already mentioned, who was then living at Wittenberg, and who made the suggestion to the magistrates of Ulm.

But Luther's chief advice was directed to the requirements of the Church and the State, or 'temporal government,' which assuredly were then in need of educated and well-cultured servants. For the training here required, the ancient languages, Latin and Greek, were indispensable, and for the ministers of the Church, Greek and Hebrew in particular, as the languages in which the Word of God was originally conveyed to man. 'Languages,' he says, 'are the sheaths which enclose the sword of the Spirit, the shrine in which this treasure is carried, the vessel which contains this drink.' He insisted further on the study of history, and especially of that of Germany. It was a matter of regret to him that so little had been done towards writing the history of Germany, whilst the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews had compiled theirs with such industry. 'O! how many good histories and sayings,' he remarked, 'we ought to have in our possession, of all that has been done and said in different parts of Germany, and of which we know nothing. That is why, in other countries, people know nothing about us Germans, and all the world calls us German beasts, who can do nothing but fight, and guzzle, and drink.' Such were his opinions, as given in 1524, in a public letter 'To the Councillors of all the States of Germany; an appeal to institute and maintain Christian schools.'

The enthusiasm which had recently inspired young men of talent and ambition to study and imitate the ancient classics, and had banded together the leading teachers of Humanism, very quickly died away. The universities everywhere were less frequented. Enemies of Luther ascribed this to the influence of his doctrines, though matters were little better where his doctrines were repudiated. It is not, indeed, surprising that the Humanist movement, with its regard for formal culture and æsthetic enjoyment, and its aristocracy of intellect, should retire perforce before the supreme struggle, involving the highest issues and interests of life, which was now being waged by the German people and the Church. A further cause of this decline of academical studies was to be found, no doubt, in the vigorous, and somewhat giddy bound taken by trade and commerce in those days of increased communication and extensive geographical discovery, and in the striving after material gain and enjoyment, which seemed to find satisfaction in other ways more easily and rapidly than by learned industry and the pursuit of culture. It was from these quarters that came the complaints against the great merchants' houses, the usury, the rise in prices, the luxury and extravagance of the age,—complaints which were re-echoed alike by the friends and foes of the Reformation. The Reformers themselves fully recognised the thanks they owed to those Humanistic studies, and their permanent value for Church and State. In the new church regulations introduced in the towns and districts which accepted the evangelical teaching, the school system then played a prominent part. Nüremberg, some years after, was among the most active to establish a good high school. Luther himself went in April 1525 with Melancthon to his native place Eisleben, to assist in promoting a school, founded there by Count Albert of Mansfeld: his friend Agricola was the head master.

Thus we see that the work of planting and building occupied Luther at this time more than the contest with his old opponents. Well might he, as he says in his hymn, rejoice to see the spring-tide and the flowers, and hope for a rich summer.

On the other hand, not only did the adherents of the old system knit their ranks together more closely, and, like the confederates of Ratisbon in 1524, profess their desire to do something at least to satisfy the general complaint of the corruption of the Church; but men even, who from their undeniably deep and earnest striving for religion, seemed originally called to take part in the work and war, now separated themselves from Luther and his associates, not venturing to break free from the bonds of old ecclesiastical tradition. Still more was this the case with men of Humanistic culture, whose temporary alliance with Luther had been dictated more by the interest they felt in the arts and letters threatened by the old monastic spirit, and by the open scandal caused by the outrageous abuses of the clergy and monachism, than by any sympathy with his religious principles and ideas. And to those who wavered in so momentous a decision, and shrank back from it and the contests it involved, there was plenty in what they observed among Luther's adherents, to give them occasion for still further reflection. It was not to be denied that, sharply as Luther had reproved the conduct of the Wittenberg innovators, the new preaching gave rise among excited multitudes, in many places, to disturbance, disorder, and acts of violence against obstinate monks and priests; and all this was held up as a proof of what the consequences must be of a general dissolution of religious ties. The desertion of their convents by monks and nuns, ostensibly on the ground of their newly-proclaimed liberty, but in reality, for the most part, as was alleged against them by the Catholics, for the sake of carnal freedom, was denounced with no small severity by Luther himself; but, in so doing, he recalled to mind the fact, that equally low interests had led them into the convents, and that the cloisters also, after their fashion, indulged in the 'worship of the belly.' Luther was just as indignant that the great majority of those who refused to be robbed any longer of their money and goods at the demand and by the deceits of the Papal Church, now withheld them both from serving the objects of Christian love and benevolence, which they were all the more called on to promote. The enemies of the new doctrine began already to charge against it that the faith, which was supposed to make men so blessed, bore so little good fruit. Lastly, there were many honest-minded men, and many, also, who looked about for an excuse for abstaining from the battle, whom Luther's personal participation in the din and clamour of the fray served to scandalise, if not to alienate from his cause. Thus among those who had formerly been united by a common endeavour to improve the condition of the Church and repel the tyranny of Rome, a crisis had now begun.

Of all who drew back from Luther's work of reformation, none had been more intimately attached to him than his spiritual father, Staupitz. And this intimacy he retained as Abbot of Salzburg. In his view, nothing of all the external matters to which the Reformation was directed, seemed so important as to warrant the endangerment of religious concord and unity in the Church. Luther expressed to him the sorrow he felt at his estrangement, while renewing, at the same time, his assurance of unalterable affection and gratitude. Staupitz himself felt unhappy in his attitude and position. But even as abbot, and in the proximity of the Archbishop of Salzburg, a man of very different views and temperament to himself, he remained true to his doctrine of Faith, as being the only means of salvation and the root of all goodness. And the very last year of his life, in a letter to Luther, recommending to him a young theologian who was about to further his education at Wittenberg, he assured him of his unchanging love, 'passing the love of women' (2 Sam. i. 26), and gratefully acknowledged how his beloved Martin had first led him away 'to the living pastures from the husks for the pigs.' Luther gave a friendly welcome to the young man recommended to his care, and assisted him in gaining the desired degree of Master of Philosophy. This is the last that we hear of the intercourse between these two friends. On December 28, 1524, Staupitz died from a fit of apoplexy.

The earlier acquaintance between the Reformer and the great Humanist, Erasmus, had now developed into an irreconcilable enmity. The latter had long been unable to refrain from venting, in private and public utterances, his dissatisfaction and bitterness at the storm aroused by Luther, which was distracting the Church and disturbing quiet study. Patrons of his in high places—above all, King Henry VIII. of England—urged him to take up the cause of the Church against Luther in a pamphlet; and, difficult as he felt it to take a prominent part in such a contest, he was the less able to decline their overtures, since other Churchmen were reproaching him with having furthered by his earlier writings the pernicious movement. He chose a subject which would enable him, at any rate, while attacking Luther, to represent his own personal convictions, and to reckon on the concurrence not only of Romish zealots but also of a number of his Humanist friends, and even many men of deeply moral and religious disposition. Luther, it will be remembered, had told him plainly from the first that he knew too little of the grace of God, which alone could give salvation to sinners, and strength and ability to the good. Erasmus now retorted by his diatribe 'On Free Will,' by virtue whereof, he said, man was able and was bound to procure his own blessing and final happiness.

Luther, on perusing this treatise, in September 1524, was struck with the feebleness of its contents. So far, indeed, from defining the operation of the human will, Erasmus floated vaguely about in loose and incoherent propositions, evidently not from want of extreme care and circumspection, but from the fact that, in this province of antiquarian research, he failed in the necessary acuteness and depth of observation and thought. He declared himself ready to yield obedience to all decisions of the Church, but without expressing any opinion as to the real infallibility of an ecclesiastical tribunal. Throughout his whole treatise, however, there were personal thrusts at his enemy.

Luther, as he said, only wished to answer this diatribe out of regard to the position enjoyed by its author, and, from his sheer aversion to the book, for a long while postponed his reply. We shall see moreover, very shortly, what other pressing duties and events engrossed his attention for some time after. It was not until a year had elapsed, that his reply appeared, entitled 'On the Bondage of the Will.' Herein he pushes the propositions to which Erasmus took exception to their logical conclusion. Free Will, as it is called, has always been subject to the supremacy of a higher Power; with unredeemed sinners to the power of the devil; with the redeemed, to the saving, sanctifying, and sheltering Hand of God. For the latter, salvation is assured by His Almighty and grace-conferring Will. The fact that in other sinners no such conversion to God and to a redeeming faith in His Word is effected, can only be ascribed to the inscrutable Will of God Himself, nor durst man dispute thereon with his Maker. Luther in this went further than did afterwards the Evangelical Church that bears his name. And even he, later on, abstained himself and warned others to abstain from discussing such Divine mysteries and questions connected with them. But as for Erasmus, he never ceased to regard him as one who, from his superficial worldliness, was blind to the highest truth of salvation

In respect to the battle against Catholic Churchdom and dogma, the controversy between Luther and Erasmus presents no new issue or further development. But in company with their old master, other Humanists also, the leading champions of the general culture of the age, dissociated themselves from Luther, and returned, as his enemies, to their allegiance to the traditional system of the Church. Next to Erasmus, the most important of these men was Pirkheimer of Nüremberg, to whom we have already referred.

CHAPTER V.

THE REFORMER AGAINST THE FANATICS AND PEASANTS UP TO 1525.

In his new as in his old contests, Luther's experiences remained such as he described them to Hartmuth of Kronberg, on his return to Wittenberg. 'All my enemies, near as they have reached me, have not hit me as hard as I have now been hit by our own people.'

At first, indeed, Carlstadt kept silent, and continued quietly, till Easter 1523, his lectures at the university. But inwardly he was inclined to a mysticism resembling that of the Zwickau fanatics, and imbibed, like theirs, from mediæval writings; and he too, soon turned, with these views, to new and practical projects of reform.

He now began to unfold in writing his ideas of a true union of the soul with God. He too explained how the souls of all creatures should empty themselves, so to speak, and prepare themselves in absolute passiveness, in 'inaction and lassitude,' for a glorified state. His profession of learning, and his academical and clerical dignities he resigned, as ministering to vanity. He bought a small property near Wittenberg, and repaired thither to live as a layman and peasant. He wore a peasant's coat, and mixed with the other peasants as 'Neighbour Andrew.' Luther saw him there, standing with bare feet amid heaps of manure, and loading it on a cart.

He found a place for the exercise of his new work in the church at Orlamünde on the Saale, above Jena. This parish, like several others, had been incorporated with the university at Wittenberg, and its revenues formed part of its endowment, being specially attached to the archdeaconry of the Convent Church, which was united with Carlstadt's professorship. The living there, with most of its emoluments, had passed accordingly to Carlstadt, but the office of pastor could only be performed by vicars, as they were called, regularly nominated, and appointed by the Elector. Carlstadt now took advantage of a vacancy in the office, to go on his own authority as pastor to Orlamünde, without wishing to resign his appointment and its pay at Wittenberg. By his preaching and personal influence he soon won over the local congregation to his side, and ended by gaining as great an influence here as he had done at Wittenberg. Here also the images were abolished and destroyed, crucifixes and other representations of Christ no less than images of the saints. Carlstadt now openly declared that no respect was to be paid to any local authority, nor any regard to other congregations; they were to execute freely the commands of God, and whatever was contrary to God, they were to cast down and hew to pieces. And in interpreting and applying these commands of God he went to more extravagant lengths than ever. Must not the letter of the Old Testament be the law for other things as well as images? Acting on this idea, he demanded that Sunday should be observed with rest in all the Mosaic rigour of the term; this rest he identified with that 'inaction,' which formed his idea of true union with God. He proceeded then to advocate polygamy, as permitted to the Jews in the Old Testament: he actually advised an inhabitant of Orlamünde to take a second wife, in addition to the one then living. He began, at the same time, to dispute the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament—a doctrine which Luther steadfastly insisted on in his contest with the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. By an extraordinary perversion, as is evident at a glance, of the meaning of Christ's words of institution, he maintained that when our Saviour said 'This is My Body,'—alluding, of course, to the bread which He was then distributing, He was not referring to the bread at all, but only to His own body, as He stood there.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring town of Kahla were seized with the same spirit. These mystical ideas and phrases assumed strange forms of expression among the common people, who jumbled together in wild confusion the supernatural and the material. Carlstadt kept up also a secret correspondence with Münzer.

The question of the authority of the Old Testament soon took a wider range. It seemed to be one of the authority of Scripture in general, which was contended for against the Papists. If the authority of God's Word in the Old Testament applied to the whole domain of civil life, should it not equally apply, as against particular regulations established by civil society? On these principles, for example, all taking of interest, as well as usury, was declared to be forbidden, just as it had been forbidden to God's people of old. A restoration of the Mosaic year of Jubilee was even talked of, when after fifty years all land which had passed into other hands should revert to its original owners. With eagerness the people took up these new ideas of social reform, so specious and so full of promises. The evangelical and earnest preacher, Strauss at Eisenach, worked zealously with word and pen in this direction. Even a court-preacher of Duke John, Wolfgang Stein at Weimar, espoused the movement.

Meanwhile Münzer came again to Central Germany. He had succeeded, at Easter 1523, in obtaining the office of pastor at Allstedt, a small town in a lateral valley of the Unstrut. In him, more than in any other, the spirit of the Zwickau prophets fermented with full force, and was preparing for a violent outburst. Alone, in the room of a church tower, he held secret intercourse with his God, and boasted of his answers and revelations. He affected the appearance and demeanour of a man whose soul was absorbed in tranquillity, devoid of all finite ideas or aspirations, and open and free to receive God's Spirit and inner Word. More violently than even the champions of Catholic asceticism, he reproached Luther for leading a comfortable, carnal life But his whole energies were directed to establishing a Kingdom of the Saints,—an external one, with external power and splendour. His preaching dwelt incessantly on the duty of destroying and killing the ungodly, and especially all tyrants. He wished to see a practical application given to the words of the Mosaic dispensation, commanding God's people to destroy the heathen nations from out of the promised land, to overthrow their altars, and burn their graven images with fire. Community of property was to be a particular institution of the Kingdom of God, the property being distributed to each man according to his need: whatever prince or lord refused to do this, was to be hanged or beheaded. Meanwhile, Münzer sought by means of secret emissaries in all directions to enlist the saints into a secret confederacy. His chief associate was the former monk, Pfeifer at Mühlhausen, not far from Allstedt. The Orlamündians, however, whom also he endeavoured to seduce to his policy of violence, would have nothing to say to such overtures.

The Elector Frederick even now came only tardily to the resolve, to interpose, in these ecclesiastical matters and disputes, his authority as sovereign, nor did Luther himself desire his intervention so long as the struggle was one of minds about the truth. Duke John had been strongly influenced by the ideas of his court-preacher. The princes still hoped to be able to restore peace between Luther and his colleague, Carlstadt, who, with all his misty projects, was still of importance as a theologian.

Carlstadt consented, indeed, at Easter in 1524, to resume quietly his duties at Wittenberg university. But he soon returned to Orlamünde, to re-assert his position there as head and reformer of the Church.

With regard to the question of Mosaic and civil law, Luther was now invited by John Frederick, the son of Duke John, to express his opinion. It is easy to conceive how this question might present, even to upright and calm-judging adherents of the evangelical preaching, considerations of difficulty and much inward doubt. It had cropped up as a novelty, and, as it seemed, in necessary connection with this preaching: moreover, on its answer depended a revolution of all ordinances of State and society, in accordance with the command of God.

Luther's views on this subject, however, were perfectly clear, and he expressed himself accordingly. In his opinion, the answer had been given by the keynote of evangelical teaching. It lay in the distinction between spiritual and temporal government, the essential features of which he had already explained in 1523 in his treatise 'On the Secular Power.' The life of the soul in God, its reconciliation and redemption, its relations and duty to God and fellow-man in faith and love—these are the subjects dealt with in the gospel message of salvation, or the biblical revelation in its completeness. God has left to the practical understanding and needs of man, and to the historical development of peoples and states under His overruling providence, the arrangement of forms of law for social life, without the necessity of any special revelation for that purpose. It is the duty of the secular power to administer the existing laws, and to make new ones in a proper and legal manner, according as they may think fit. That God prescribed to the people of Israel external, civil ordinances by the mouth of Moses, was part of His scheme of education. Christians are not bound by these ordinances,—no more, indeed, than is their inner life and right conduct made conditional on outward rules and forms. Moral commands alone belong to that part of the Mosaic law whereof the sanction is eternal; and to the fulfilment of these commands, written, as St. Paul says, from the beginning on the hearts of men, the Spirit of God now urges His redeemed people. No doubt the law of Moses, in regard to civil life, might contain much that would be useful for other peoples also in that respect. But it would, in that case, be the business of the powers that be to examine and borrow from it, just as Germany borrowed her civil law from the Romans.

Such, briefly stated, are the views which Luther enunciated with clearness and consistency, in his writings and sermons. He guards the civil power as jealously now against an irregular assertion of religious principles and biblical authority, as he had formerly done against the aggressions of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, while at the same time he defends the religious life of Christians against the dangers and afflictions which that hierarchy threatened. Thus he answered the prince, on June 18, 1524, to this effect: Temporal laws are something external, like eating and drinking, house and clothing. At present the laws of the Empire have to be maintained, and faith and love can co-exist with them very well. If ever the zealots of the Mosaic law become Emperors, and govern the world as their own, they may choose, if they please, the law of Moses; but Christians at all times are bound to support the law which the civil authority imposes.

In Münzer Luther looked for a near outbreak of the Evil Spirit. He alluded to him in his letter of June 18, as the 'Satan of Allstedt,' adding that he thought he was not yet quite fledged. He soon heard more about him, namely, that 'his Spirit was going to strike out with the fist.' On this subject he wrote the next month to the Elector Frederick and Duke John, and published his letter. Against Münzer's mere words—his preaching and his personal revilements—he was not now concerned to defend himself. 'Let them boldly preach,' he says, 'what they can. . . . . Let the Spirits rend and tear each other. A few, perhaps, may be seduced; but that happens in every war. Wherever there is a battle and fighting, some one must fall and be wounded.' He repeats here, what he had said before, that Antichrist should be destroyed 'without hands,' and that Christ contended with the Spirit of His Word. But if they really meant to strike out with the fist, then Luther would have the prince say to them, 'Keep your fists quiet, for that is our office, or else leave the country.'

In August Luther came himself to Weimar, in obedience to a wish expressed by the two princes. With the court-preacher he had come to a friendly understanding. Münzer had just left Allstedt, an official report of his dangerous proceedings having been forwarded from there to Weimar, whither he was summoned for an examination and inquiry. On August 14 Luther wrote from this town to the magistrate of Mühlhausen, where Münzer, as he heard, had taken refuge and had already mustered a party. He warned the people of Mühlhausen to wait at least before receiving Münzer, until they had heard 'what sort of children he and his followers were.' They would not remain long in the dark about him. He was a tree, as he had shown at Zwickau and Allstedt, which bore no fruit but murder and rebellion.

From Weimar Luther travelled on to Orlamünde. On August 21 he arrived at Jena, where a preacher named Reinhard was staying with Carlstadt. Luther here preached against the 'Spirit of Allstedt,' which destroyed images, despised the sacrament, and incited to rebellion. Carlstadt, who was present and heard the sermon, waited on him afterwards at his lodging, to defend himself against these charges. Luther insisted, notwithstanding, that Carlstadt was 'an associate of the new prophets.' He challenged him finally to abandon his intrigues and confute him openly in writing, and the heated interview ended by Carlstadt promising to do so, and by Luther giving him a florin as a pledge and token of the bargain.

From Jena Luther went through Kahla, where also he preached, to Orlamünde. The people here had been anxious for a personal discussion with him, but in writing to him for that purpose, had addressed him in words as follows: 'You despise all those who, by God's command, destroy dumb idols, against which you trump up feeble evidence out of your own head, and not grounded on Scripture. Your venturing thus publicly to slander us, members of Christ, shows that you are no member of the real Christ.' The discussion he held with them led to no success, and he gave up any further attempt to convince them; for, as he said, they burned like a fire, as if they longed to devour him. On his departure they pursued him with savage shouts of execration.

Carlstadt, a few weeks later, was deprived of his professorship, and had to leave the country. Luther put in a word for the people of Orlamünde as 'good simple folk,' who had been seduced by a stronger will. But against Carlstadt's whole conduct and teaching he launched an elaborate attack in a pamphlet, published in two parts, at the close of 1524 and the beginning of the following year. It was entitled 'Against the Celestial Prophets, concerning Images and the Sacrament, &c.,' with the motto 'Their folly shall be manifest unto all men' (2 Timothy iii. 9). For in Carlstadt he sought to expose and combat the same spirit that dwelt in the Zwickau prophets and in Münzer, and that threatened to produce still worse results. If Carlstadt, like Moses, was right in teaching people to break down images, and in calling in for this purpose the aid of the disorderly rabble, instead of the proper authorities, then the mob had the power and right to execute in like manner all the commands of God. And the consequence and sequel of this would be, what was soon shown by Münzer. 'It will come to this length,' says Luther, 'that they will have to put all ungodly people to death; for so Moses (Deut. vii.), when he told the people to break down the images, commanded them also to kill without mercy all those who had made them in the land of Canaan.'

The great storm, announced and prepared by the 'Spirit of Allstedt,' broke loose even sooner than could have been expected.

Münzer had really appeared at Mühlhausen. The town-council, however, were still able to insist on his leaving the place, together with his friend Pfeifer. He then wandered about for several weeks in the south-west of Germany, exciting disturbance wherever he went. But on September 13 he returned with Pfeifer to Mühlhausen, where he preached in his wonted manner, propounded to the people in the streets his doctrines and revelations, and attracted the mob to his side, while respectable citizens and members of the magistracy left the town from fear of the mischief that was threatening. Towards the end of February he was offered a regular post as pastor, and soon after all the old magistrates were turned out and others more favourable to him elected in their place. The multitude raged against images and convents. The peasants from the neighbourhood flocked in, anxious for the general equality which was promised them. Luther wrote to a friend, 'Münzer is King and Emperor at Mühlhausen.'

Meanwhile, in Southern Germany peasant insurrections had broken out in various places since the summer of this year. In itself, there was nothing novel in this. Repeatedly during the latter part of the previous century, the poor peasantry had risen and erected their banner, the 'Shoe of the League' (*Bundschuh*), so called from the rustic shoes which the insurgents wore. Their grievances were the intolerable and ever-growing burdens, laid upon them by the lay and clerical magnates, the taxes of all kinds squeezed from them by every ingenious device, and the feudal service which they were forced to perform. The nobles had, in fact, towards the close of the middle ages, usurped a much larger exercise of their ancient privileges against them, by means partly of a dexterous manipulation of the old Roman law, and partly of the ignorance of that law which prevailed among their vassals. On the other side, complaints were heard at that time of the insolence shown by the wealthier peasants; of the luxury, in which they tried to rival their masters; and of the arrogance and defiant demeanour of the peasantry in general. The oppression endured by any particular class of the civil community does not usually lead to violent disturbances and outbreaks, unless and until that class is awakened to a higher sense of its own importance and has acquired an increase of power. The peasants found, moreover, discontented spirits like themselves among the lower orders in the towns, who were avowed enemies of the upper classes, and who complained bitterly of the hardships and oppressions suffered by small people at the hands of the great merchants and commercial companies,—in a word, from the power of capital. Furthermore, when once the peasants rose in rebellion against their masters, the latter also, including the nobility, showed an inclination here and there to favour a general revolution, if only to remedy the defects of their own position. And, in truth, throughout the German Empire at that time there was a general movement pressing for a readjustment of the relations of the various classes to each other and to the Imperial power. Ideas of a total reconstruction of society and the State had penetrated the mass of the people, to an extent never known before.

Thus the way was paved, and incentives already supplied for a powerful popular movement, apart altogether from the question of Church Reform. And indeed this question Luther was anxious, as we have seen, to restrict to the domain of spiritual, as distinguished from secular, that is to say, political and civil action. It was impossible, however, but that the accusations of lying, tyranny, and hostility to evangelical truth, now freely levelled against the dominant priesthood and the secular lords who were persecuting the gospel, should serve to intensify to the utmost the prevailing bitterness against external oppression. With the same firmness and decision with which Luther condemned all disorderly and violent proceedings in support of the gospel, he had also long been warning its persecutors of the inevitable storm which they would bring upon themselves. Other evangelical preachers, however, as for instance, Eberlin and Strauss, mingled with their popular preaching all sorts of suggestions of social reform. At last men went about among the people, with open or disguised activity, whose principles were directly opposed to those of Luther, but who proclaimed themselves, nevertheless, enthusiasts for the gospel which he had brought again to light, or which, as they pretended, they had been the first to reveal, together with true evangelical liberty. They appealed to God's Word in support of the claims and grievances of the oppressed classes; they grasped their weapons by virtue of the Divine law. Hence the peculiar ardour and energy that marked the insurrection, although the enthusiasm, thus kindled, was united with the utmost barbarity and licentiousness. Never has Germany been threatened with a revolution so vast and violent, or so immeasurable in its possible results. On no single man's word did so much depend as on that of Luther, the genuine man of the people.

The movement began late in the summer of 1524 in the Black Forest and Hegau. After the beginning of the next year it continued rapidly to spread, and the different groups of insurgents who were fighting here and there, combined in a common plan of action. Like a flood the movement forced its way eastwards into Austria, westwards into Alsatia, northwards into Franconia, and even as far as Thuringia. At Rothenburg on the Tauber, Carlstadt had prepared the way for it by inciting the people to destroy the images. The demands in which the peasants were unanimous, were now drawn up in twelve articles. These still preserved a very moderate aspect. They claimed above all the right of each parish to choose its own minister. Tithes were only to be abolished in part. The peasants were determined to be regarded no longer as the 'property of others,' for Christ had redeemed all alike with his blood. They demanded for everyone the right to hunt and fish, because God had given to all men alike power over the animal creation. They based their demands upon the Word of God; trusting to His promises they would venture the battle. 'If we are wrong,' they said, 'let Luther set us right by the Scriptures.' God, who had freed the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh, would now shortly deliver His people. In these articles, and in other proclamations of the peasantry, there were none of the wild imaginations of Münzer and his prophets, nor their ideas of a kingdom and schemes of murder. They burned down, it is true, both convents and cities, and had done so from the outset. Still in some places a more peaceable understanding was arrived at with the upper classes, although neither party placed any real confidence in the other.

When now the articles arrived at Wittenberg, and Luther heard how the insurgents appealed to him, he prepared early in April to make a public declaration, in which he arraigned their proceedings, but at the same time exhorted the princes to moderation. He was just then called away by Count Albert of Mansfeld to Eisleben, to assist, as we have seen, in the establishment of a new school in that town. He set off thither on Easter Sunday, April 16, after preaching in the morning. There he wrote his 'Exhortation to peace: On the Twelve Articles of the Peasantry in Swabia.

In this manifesto he sharply rebukes those princes and nobles, bishops and priests, who cease not to rage against the gospel, and in their temporal government 'tax and fleece their subjects, for the advancement of their own pomp and pride, until the common people can endure it no longer.' If God for their punishment allowed the devil to stir up tumult against them, He and his gospel were not to blame; but he counselled them to try by gentle means to soften, if possible, God's wrath against them. As for the peasants, he had never from the first concealed from them his suspicions, that many of them only pretended to appeal to Scripture, and offered for mere appearance' sake to be further instructed therein. But he wished to speak to them affectionately, like a friend and a brother, and he admitted also that godless lords often laid intolerable burdens upon the people. But however much in their articles might be just and reasonable, the gospel, he said, had nothing to do with their demands, and by their conduct they showed that they had forgotten the law of Christ. For by the Divine law it was forbidden to extort anything from the authorities by force: the badness of the latter was no excuse for violence and rebellion. Respecting the substance of their demands, their first article, claiming to elect their own pastor, if the civil authority refused to provide one, was right enough and Christian; but in that case they must maintain him at their own expense, and on no account protect him by force against the civil power. As for the remaining articles, they had nothing whatever to do with the gospel. He tells the peasants plainly, that if they persist in their rebellion, they are worse enemies to the gospel than the Pope and Emperor, for they act against the gospel in the gospel's own name. He is bound to speak thus to them, although some among them, poisoned by fanatics, hate him and call him a hypocrite, and the devil, who was not able to kill him through the Pope, would now like to destroy and devour him. He is content if only he can save some at least of the good-hearted among them from the danger of God's indignation. In conclusion, he gives to both sides, the nobles and the peasants, his 'faithful counsel and advice, that a few counts and lords should be chosen from the nobility, and a few councillors from the towns, and that matters should be adjusted and composed in an amicable manner—that so the affair, if it cannot be arranged in a Christian spirit, may at least be settled according to human laws and agreements.'

Thus spoke Luther, with all his accustomed frankness, fervency, power, and bluntness, equally indifferent to the favour of the people or of their rulers. But what fruit, indeed, could be looked for from his words, uttered evidently with violent inward emotion, when popular passion was so excited? Was it not rather to be feared that the peasants would greedily fasten on the first portion of his pamphlet, which was directed against the nobles, and then shut their ears all the more closely against the second, which concerned their own misconduct? The pamphlet could hardly have been written, and much less published, before new rumours and forebodings crowded upon Luther, such as made him think its contents and language no longer applicable to the emergency, but that now it was his duty to sound aloud the call to battle against the enemies of peace and order. 'In my former tract,' he said, 'I did not venture to condemn the peasants, because they offered themselves to reason and better instruction. But before I could look about me, forth they rush, and fight and plunder and rage like mad dogs. . . . The worst is at Mühlhausen, where the arch-devil himself presides.'

In South Germany, on that very Easter Sunday when Luther set out for Eisleben, the scene of horror was enacted at Weinsberg, where the peasants, amid the sound of pipes and merriment, drove the unhappy Count of Helfenstein upon their spears, before the eyes of his wife and child. Luther's ignorance of this and similar atrocities, at the time when he was writing his pamphlet at Eisleben, is easily intelligible from the slow means of communication then existing. Soon the news came, however, of bands of rioters in Thuringia, busy with the work of pillage, incendiarism, and massacre, and of a rising of the peasantry in the immediate neighbourhood. Towards the end of April they achieved a crowning triumph by their victorious entry into Erfurt, where the preacher, Eberlin of Günzburg, with true loyalty and courage, but all in vain, had striven, with words of exhortation and warning, to pacify the armed multitude encamped outside the town, and their sympathisers and associates inside.

On April 26 Münzer advanced to Mühlhausen, the 'arch-devil,' as Luther called him, but as he described himself, the 'champion of the Lord.' He came with four hundred followers, and was joined by large masses of the peasants. His 'only fear,' as he said in his summons to the miners of Mansfeld, 'was that the foolish men would fall into the snare of a delusive peace.' He promised them a better result. 'Wherever there are only three among you who trust in God and seek nothing but His honour and glory, you need not fear a hundred thousand. . . . Forward now!' he cried; 'to work! to work! It is time that the villains were chased away like dogs . . . To work! relent not if Esau gives you fair words. Give no heed to the wailings of the ungodly; they will beg, weep, and entreat you for pity, like children. Show them no mercy, as God commanded Moses (Deut. vii.) and has declared the same to us. . . . To work! while the fire is hot; let not the blood cool upon your swords. . . . To work! while it is day. God is with you; follow Him!' Of Luther he spoke in terms of peculiar hatred and contempt. In a letter which he addressed to 'Brother Albert of Mansfeld,' with the object of converting the Count, he alluded to him in expressions of the coarsest possible abuse.

In Thuringia, in the Harz, and elsewhere, numbers of convents, and even castles, were reduced to ashes. The princes were everywhere unprepared with the necessary troops, while the insurgents in Thuringia and Saxony counted more than 30,000 men. The former, therefore, endeavoured to strengthen themselves by coalition. Duke

John, at Weimar, prepared himself for the worst: his brother, the Elector Frederick, was lying seriously ill at his Castle at Lochau (now Annaburg) in the district of Torgau.

At this crisis Luther, having left Eisleben, appeared in person among the excited population. He preached at Stolberg, Nordhausen, and Wallhausen. In his subsequent writings he could bear witness of himself, how he had been himself among the peasants, and how, more than once, he had imperilled life and limb. On May 3 we find him at Weimar; and a few days afterwards in the county of Mansfeld. Here he wrote to his friend, the councillor Rühel of Mansfeld, advising him not to persuade Count Albert to be 'lenient in this affair'—that is, against the insurgents; for the civil power must assert its rights and duties, however God might rule the issue. 'Be firm,' he entreats Rühel, 'that his Grace may go boldly on his way. Leave the matter to God, and fulfil His commands to wield the sword as long as strength endures. Our consciences are clear, even if we are doomed to be defeated. . . . It is but a short time, and the righteous Judge will come.'

Luther now hastened back to his Elector, having received a summons from him at Lochau. But before he could arrive there, Frederick had peacefully breathed his last, on May 5. Faithfully and discreetly, and in the honest conviction that truth would prevail, he had accorded Luther his favour and protection, whilst purposely abstaining to employ his power as ruler for infringing or invading the old-established ordinances of the Church. He allowed full liberty of action to the bishops, and carefully avoided any personal intercourse with Luther. But in the face of death, he confessed the truth of the gospel, as preached by Luther, by partaking of the communion in both kinds, and refusing the sacrament of extreme unction.

When his corpse was brought in state to Wittenberg, and buried in the Convent Church, Luther, who had to preach twice on the occasion, spoke of the universal grief and lamentation that 'our head is fallen, a peaceful man and ruler, a calm head.' And he pointed out as the 'most grievous sorrow of all,' how this loss had happened just in those difficult and wondrous times when, unless God interposed His arm, destruction threatened the whole of Germany. He exhorted his hearers to confess to God their own ingratitude for His mercy in having given them such a noble vessel of His grace. But of those who set themselves against authorities, he declared, in the words of the Apostle (Rom. xiii. 2), that 'they shall receive to themselves damnation.' 'This text,' he said, 'will do more than all the guns and spears.'

Quite in the same spirit that dictated his letter sent to Rühel only a few days before at Mansfeld, Luther now sent forth a public summons 'Against the murderous and plundering bands of peasants.' He began it with the words already quoted, 'Before I could look about me, forth they rush . . . and rage like mad dogs.'

Thus he wrote when he saw the danger was at its highest. He even suggested the possibility 'that the peasants might get the upper hand (which God forbid!);' and that 'God perhaps willed that, in preparation for the Last Day, the devil should be allowed to destroy all order and authority, and the world turned into a howling wilderness.' But he called upon the Christian authorities, with all the more urgency and vehemence, to use the sword against the devilish villains, as God had given them command. They should leave the issue to God, acknowledge to Him that they had well deserved His judgments, and thus with a good conscience and confidence 'fight as long as they could move a muscle.' Whosoever should fall on their side would be a true martyr in God's eyes, if he had fought with such a conscience. Then, thinking of the many better people who had been forced by the bloodthirsty peasants and murderous prophets to join the devilish confederacy, he broke out by exclaiming, 'Dear lords, help them, save them, take pity upon these poor men; but as to the rest, stab, crush, strangle whom you can.'

These words of Luther were speedily fulfilled by the events. The Saxon princes, the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Counts of Mansfeld combined together before the mass of the peasants in Thuringia and Saxony had collected into a large army. On May 15 the forces of Münzer, numbering about 8,000 men, were defeated in the battle of Frankenhausen. Münzer himself was taken prisoner, and, crushed in mind and spirit, was executed like a criminal. A few days before, the main army of the Swabian peasants had been routed, and during the following weeks, one stronghold of the rebellion after another was reduced, and the horrors perpetrated by the peasants were repaid with fearful vengeance on their heads. The Landgrave Philip, and John, the new Elector of Saxony, distinguished themselves by their clemency in dismissing unpunished to their homes, after the victory, a number of the insurgent peasants.

But Luther's violent denunciations now gave offence even to some of his friends. His Catholic opponents, and those even who saw no harm in burning heretics wholesale for no other reason than their faith, reproached him then, and do so even now, with horrible cruelty for this language. Luther replied to the 'complaints and questions about his pamphlet,' with a public 'Epistle on the harsh pamphlet against the peasants.' His excitement and irritation was increased by what he heard talked about his conduct. He maintained what he had said. But he also reminded his readers, that he had never, as his calumniators accused him, spoken of acting against the conquered and humbled, but solely of smiting those actually engaged in rebellion. He declared further, at the close of his new and forcible remarks on the use of the sword, that Christian authorities, at any rate, were bound, if victorious, to 'show mercy not only to the innocent, but also to the guilty.' As for the 'furious raging and senseless tyrants, who even after the battle cannot satiate themselves with blood, and throughout their life never trouble themselves about Christ' —with these he will have nothing whatever to do. Similarly, in a small tract on Münzer, containing characteristic extracts from the writings of this 'bloodthirsty prophet,' as a warning to the people, Luther entreated the lords and civil authorities 'to be merciful to the prisoners and those who surrendered, . . . so that the tables should not be turned upon the victors.' If we have now to lament, as we must, that after the rebellion was put down, nothing was done to remedy the real evils that caused it; nay, that those very evils were rather increased as a punishment for the vanquished, this reproach at least applies just as much to the Catholic lords, both spiritual and temporal, as to the Evangelical authorities or Luther.

In addition also to his alleged harshness and severity to the insurgents, Luther was accused, both then and since, by his ecclesiastical opponents, of having given rise to the rebellion by his preaching and writings. When the danger and anxiety were over, Emser had the effrontery to say of him in some popular doggrel, 'Now that he has lit the fire, he washes his hands like Pilate, and turns his cloak to the wind;' and again, 'He himself cannot deny that he exhorted you to rebellion, and called all of you dear children of God, who gave up to it your lives and property, and washed your hands in blood. Thus did he write in public, and thereto has he striven.'

In answer to this charge, Luther referred to his treatise 'On the Secular Power,' and to other of his writings. 'I know well,' he was able to say with truth, 'that no teacher before me has written so strongly about secular authority; my very enemies ought to thank me for this. Who ever made a stronger stand against the peasants, with writing and preaching, than myself?' Among the Estates of the Empire, not even the most violent enemies of evangelical

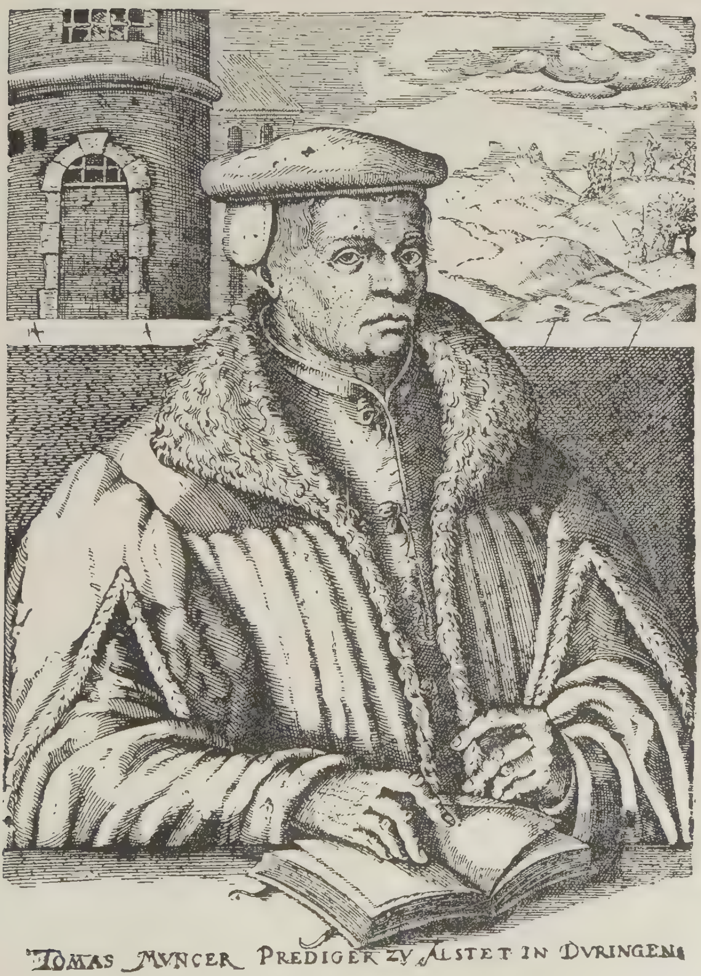
TOMAS MVNCER PREDIGER ZV ALSTET IN DVRINGEN

FIG. 28.—MÜNZER (his execution in the background.)
From an old woodcut.

doctrine could venture now to turn their victorious weapons against their associates in arms who espoused that doctrine, with whom they had achieved the common conquest. and from whose midst had sounded the most vigorous call to battle and to victory. Luther, on the contrary, was not afraid at this moment to exhort the Archbishop, Cardinal Albert, of whose friendly disposition to himself, his friend Rühel had recently informed him, to follow the example of his cousin, the Grand Master in Prussia, by converting his bishopric into a temporal princedom, and entering the state of matrimony, and to name, as the chief motive for so doing, the 'hateful and horrible rebellion,' wherewith God's wrath had visited the sins of the priesthood.

Thus did Luther, in these stormy times, whatever might be thought of the violence of his utterances, take up his position clearly and resolutely from the first, and maintain it to the end;—sure of his cause, and safe against the new attack which he saw now the devil was making; unyielding and defiant towards his old Papal enemies and their new calumniations. And in this frame of mind he took just now a step, calculated to sharpen all the tongues of slander, but one in which he saw the fulfilment of his calling. Freed from unchristian monastic vows, he entered into the holy state of matrimony ordained by God. We first hear him speaking decidedly on this subject in a letter to Rühel of May 4. After referring to the devil as the instigator of the insurgent peasants, and of the murderous deeds which made him anxious to prepare himself for death, he continues with the following remarkable words: 'And if I can, in spite of him, I will take my Kate in marriage before I die. I hope they will not take from me my courage and my joy.'

CHAPTER VI.

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

Our readers will recall to mind those words of Luther at the Wartburg, on hearing that his teaching was making the clergy marry and monks renounce the obligation of their vows. No wife, he declared, should be forced upon him. He remained in his convent; looked on quietly, as one friend and fellow-labourer after the other took advantage of their liberty; wished them happiness in the enjoyment of it, and advised others to do the same; but never changed his views about himself.

His enemies reproached him with living a worldly life, with drinking beer in company with his friends, with playing the lute, and so on. Nor was it merely his Catholic opponents who sought in such charges material for vile slander, but also jealous ranters like Münzer gave vent to their hatred in this manner. All the more remarkable it is that no slanderous reports of immoral conduct were ever launched at this time, even by his bitterest enemies, against the man who was denouncing so openly and sternly offences of that description among the superior, no less than the inferior, clergy. Calumnies of this kind were reserved for the occasion of his marriage.

In truth, his life was one of the most arduous labour, anxiety, and excitement; and as regards his bodily needs, he was satisfied with the plainest and most sparing diet and the simplest enjoyments. The Augustinian convent, whence he received his support, being gradually denuded of its inmates by their abandonment of monastic life, its revenues accordingly were stopped. Luther informed Spalatin in 1524 of the poverty to which they were reduced; not indeed, as Spalatin well knew, that he concerned himself much about it, or wished to make it a subject of complaint; if he had no meat or wine, he could live well enough on bread and water. Melancthon describes how once, before his marriage, Luther's bed had not been made for a whole year, and was mildewed with perspiration. 'I was tired out,' says Luther, 'and worked myself nearly to death, so that I fell into the bed and knew nothing about it.'

When, moreover, he exchanged, as we have seen, in the autumn of 1524, the monastic cowl for the garb of a professor; and when he and the prior Brisger were the only ones of all the former monks left in the convent, he remained quietly where he was, and never entertained the idea of marriage. A noble lady, Argula von Staufen, wife of the Ritter von Grumbach, formerly in the Bavarian army, who had written publicly for the cause of the gospel, and thereby incurred, with her husband, the displeasure of the Duke of Bavaria, and who was now in active correspondence with the Wittenbergers and Spalatin, expressed to the latter her surprise that Luther did not marry. Luther thereupon wrote to Spalatin on November 30, 1524, saying, 'I am not surprised that folks gossip thus about me, as they gossip about many other things. But please thank the lady in my name, and tell her that I am in the hands of the Lord, as a creature whose heart He can change and re-change, destroy or revive, at any hour or moment; but as my heart has hitherto been, and is now, it will never come to pass that I shall take a wife. Not that I am insensible to my flesh or sex, . . . but because my mind is averse to wedlock, because I daily expect the death and the well-merited punishment of a heretic.'

Shortly afterwards Luther wrote to his friend Link: 'Suddenly, and while I was occupied with far other thoughts, the Lord has plunged me into marriage.' It was in the spring of 1525 that he had formed this resolve, which speedily ripened to its fulfilment.

In a letter of March 12, 1525, he complained to his friend Amsdorf, who had gone to Magdeburg, of depression of spirits and temptation, and besought him to pay him a friendly visit to cheer him. It was, as we see from the contents of the letter, a temptation, which caused Luther to feel that, in the words of Scripture, it was 'not good for man to be alone,' but that he ought to have a help-meet to be with him. As to the choice of such a help-meet he may have already talked with Amsdorf, and very possibly they may have spoken of a lady of Magdeburg of the family of Alemann, who were conspicuous there for their devotion to the evangelical cause.

But Luther's own choice turned on Catharine von Bora, a former nun. Sprung from an ancient, though poor family of noble blood, she had been brought up from childhood in the convent of Nimtzch near Grimma. We find her there as early as 1509; she was born on January 29, 1499, and was consecrated as a nun at the age of sixteen. When the evangelical doctrine became known at Nimtzch, Catharine endeavoured with other nuns to break the bonds, which she had taken upon herself without any real free-will or knowledge of her own. In vain she entreated her relatives to release her. At length one Leonhard Koppe, a burgher and councillor of Torgau, took her part. Assisted by him and two of his friends, nine nuns escaped secretly from the convent on Easter Eve, April 5, 1523. Luther justified their escape in a public letter addressed to Koppe, and collected funds for their support, until they could be further provided for. They fled first to Wittenberg, and here Catharine stayed at the house of the town clerk and future burgomaster, Philip Reichenbach.

She was now in her twenty-sixth year, when Luther turned his thoughts towards her. He told afterwards his friends and Catharine herself, with perfect frankness, that he had not been in love with her before, for he had his suspicions, and they were not unfounded, that she was proud. He had even thought, shortly before, of arranging a marriage between her and a minister named Glatz, who later on, however, proved himself unworthy of his office. Catharine, on the other hand, is said to have gone to Amsdorf, as the trusted friend of Luther, and to have told him frankly that she did not wish to marry Glatz, but was ready to form an honourable alliance with himself or with Luther. If Cranach's portrait of her is to be trusted, she was not remarkable for beauty or any outward attraction. But she was a healthy, strong, frank and true German woman. Luther might reasonably expect to have in her a loyal, fresh-hearted, and staunch help-meet for his life, whose own cares or requirements would cause him little anxiety, while she would be just such a companion as, with his physical ailments and mental troubles, he required. In the event of her haughty disposition asserting itself unduly, he was the very man to correct it with quiet firmness and affection.

What further considerations induced him to marry, appear from his letters, in which he urged his friends to do likewise. Thus he wrote on March 27 to Wolfgang Reissenbusch, preceptor of the convent at Lichtenberg, saying that man was created by God for marriage. God had so made man that he could not well do without it; whoever was ashamed of marrying, must also be ashamed of his manhood, or must pretend to be wiser than God. The devil had slandered the married state by letting people who lived in immorality be held in high honour. Luther, in thus frankly stating the natural disposition of man to married life, spoke from his own experience. 'To remain righteous unmarried,' he said once later on, 'is not the least of trials, as those know well who have made the attempt.' In referring as he did to the devil, he probably had in his mind the scandal which threatened him if he should decide on marrying. He then goes on to say to Reissenbusch that if he honoured the Word and work of God, the scandal would be only a matter of a moment, to be followed by years of honour. To Spalatin he writes on April 10: 'I find so many reasons for urging others to marry, that I shall soon be brought to it myself, notwithstanding that enemies never cease to condemn the married state, and our little wiseacres ridicule it every day.' The 'wiseacres' he was thinking of were professors and theologians of his circle at Wittenberg. Not only was he resolved, however, to obey the will of his Creator, despite all condemnation and ridicule, but he deemed it his duty to testify to the rightness of the step by his example as well as by his words. His enemies, in fact, were taunting him that he did not venture to practise himself what he preached to others. A few days after, immediately before his departure for Eisleben, he wrote again to Spalatin, recommending his friend, who had been so utterly averse to matrimony, to take care that he was not anticipated in the step.

Amidst all the terrors of the Peasants' War, which had now broken out in all its violence, and in earnest contemplation of a near end possibly threatening himself, he had formed the fixed resolve, as his letter of May 4 to Rühel shows, to 'take his Kate to wife, in spite of the devil.' This is the first letter in which he mentions her name to a friend. And to this resolve he steadily adhered during the troublous weeks that followed, when he was called on to pay the last honours to his Elector, to rouse men to the sanguinary contest with the peasants, and to hear contumely and reproach heaped upon his stirring words. Besides writing to the Cardinal Albert himself, recommending him to marry, he sent a letter also on June 3 to his friend Rühel, who held office as one of his advisers, saying, 'If my marrying might serve in any way to strengthen his Grace to do the same, I should be very willing to set his Grace the example; for I have a mind, before leaving this world, to enter the married state, to which I believe God has called me.' He had thoughts of this kind, he added, even if it should end only in a betrothal, and not an actual marriage.

He speedily gave effect to his final resolve, in order to cut short all the loose and idle gossip which threatened him as soon as his intentions were known with regard to Catharine von Bora. He took none of his friends into his confidence, but acted, as he afterwards advised others to act. 'It is not good,' he said, 'to talk much about such matters. A man must ask God for counsel, and pray, and then act accordingly.'

As to how he finally came to terms with Catharine we have no account to show. But on the evening of June 13, on the Tuesday after the feast of the Trinity, he invited to his house his friends Bugenhagen, the parish priest of the town, Jonas, the professor and provost of the church of All Saints, Lucas Cranach with his wife, and the juristic professor Apel, formerly a dean of the Cathedral at Bamberg, who himself had married a nun, and in their presence was married to Catharine. The marriage was solemnised in the customary way. The pair were asked, by the priest present, Bugenhagen, according to the custom prevailing in Germany, and which Luther afterwards followed in his tract on Marriage, whether they would take one another for husband and wife; their right hands were then joined together, and thus, in the name of the Trinity, they were 'joined together in matrimony.' The ceremony was therewith concluded, and Catharine remained thenceforth with Luther as his wife. Some days after Luther gave a little breakfast to his friends; and the magistracy, of whom Cranach was a member, sent him their congratulations, together with a present of wine. A fortnight later, on June 27, Luther celebrated his wedding in grander style, by a nuptial feast, in order to gather his distant friends around him. He wrote to them saying that they were to 'seal and ratify' his marriage, and 'help to pronounce the benediction.' Above all he rejoiced to be able to see his 'dear father and mother' at the feast. Among the motives for his marrying he especially mentioned that he had felt himself bound to fulfil an old duty, in accordance with his father's wishes.

Great as was the surprise which Luther occasioned by his speedy marriage, it was no greater than the talk and sensation that immediately ensued.

Among even his adherents and friends—especially the 'wiseacres' of whom he had spoken—there was much astonishment and shaking of heads. It was considered that the great man had lowered himself, and gossip was busy in asking what reasons could have induced him to take the step. Melancthon, his devoted friend, lost for the moment, as is shown by his letter of June 16 to the philologist Camerarius, his accustomed self-possession. He admitted that married life was a holy state, and one well-pleasing to God, and that its results might be beneficial to Luther's nature and character; but he was of opinion that Luther's lowering himself to this condition was a lamentable act of weakness, and injurious to his reputation—and that, too, at a time when Germany was more than ever in need of all his spirit and his energy. Luther had not invited him to be present on the 13th, from a suspicion that Melancthon would scarcely approve of what he was doing. A few days afterwards, however, he warmly besought Link, their common friend, to be sure and attend their nuptial feast on the 27th. That Luther, in this respect also, had acted as a man of strong character and determination, would soon be evident to them all.

His enemies seized the occasion of his marriage to spread vulgar falsehoods about him, which soon were further exaggerated, and have been raked up shamelessly again, even in our own time, or at least repeated in veiled and scandalous inuendoes.

As for Luther himself, he at first felt strange in the new mode of life which he had entered at the age of forty-one, so suddenly, and in the midst of his arduous labours, and the stirring public events and struggles of the time. At the same time he could not but be aware of the unfavourable reception which his step would encounter, even with his friends at Wittenberg. Melancthon found him, during the early days of his married life, in a restless and uncertain mood. But he remained firm in his conviction that God had called him to the married state. The same day that Melancthon wrote so anxiously to Camerarius about his marriage, Luther himself wrote to Spalatin, saying, 'I have made myself so vile and contemptible forsooth, that all the angels, I hope, will laugh, and all the devils

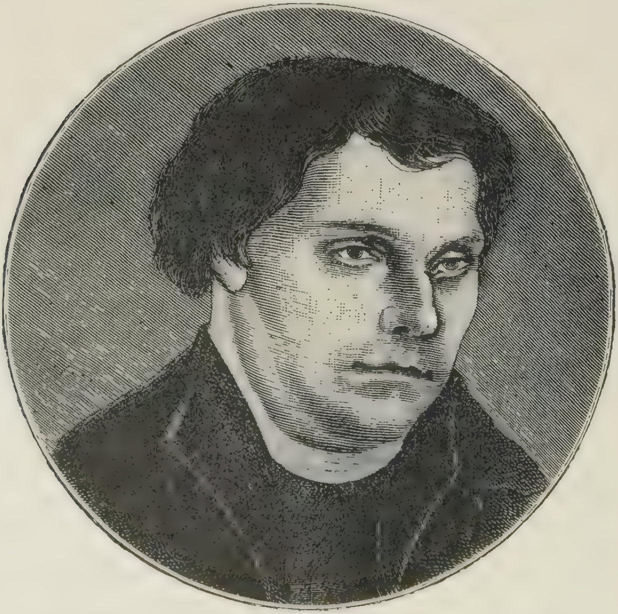

Fig. 29.—Luther. (From a Portrait by Cranach in 1525.) At Wittenberg.

weep.' In his letter of invitation to his friends for June 27, friendly humour is mingled with words of deep earnestness; nay, even with thoughts of death, and a longing for release from this infatuated world. Later on Luther preached, on the ground of his own experiences, about the blessings, the joys, and the purifying burdens of the state ordained and sanctified by God, and never without an expression of gratitude to God for having brought him to enter into it. Seventeen years after his marriage he bore testimony to Catharine in his will, that she had been to him a 'pious, faithful, and devoted wife, always loving, worthy, and beautiful.'

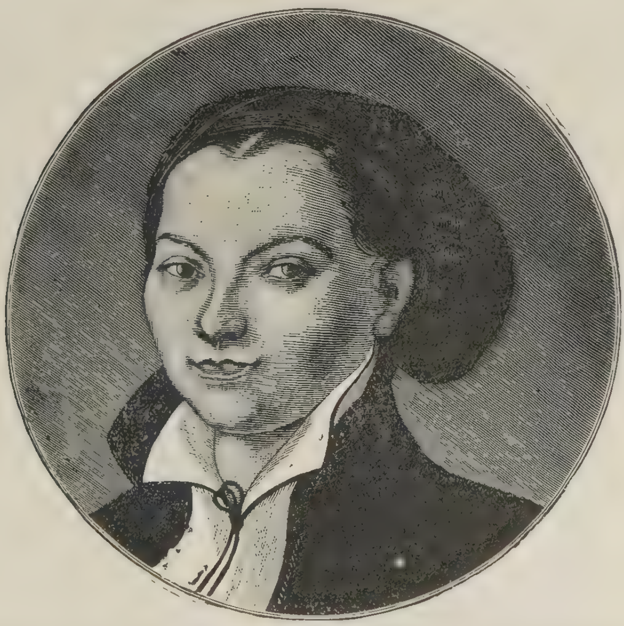

FIG. 30.—CATHARINE VON BORA, LUTHER'S WIFE. (From a Portrait by Cranach about 1525.) At Berlin.

Of the wedding feast of June 27 we have no further details. It was, so far as concerns the repast, a very simple one, as compared with the elaborate nuptial entertainments then in fashion. The university presented Luther with a beautifully chased goblet of silver, bearing round its base the words: 'The honourable University of the Electoral town of Wittenberg presents this wedding gift to Doctor Martin Luther and his wife Kethe von Bora.'[1]

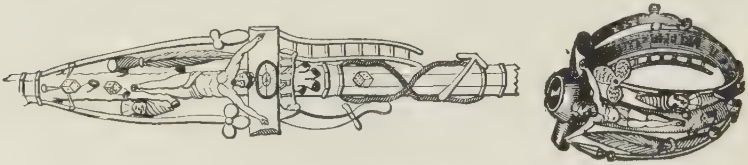

FIG. 31.—LUTHER'S RING FROM CATHARINE.

Apartments in the convent, which Brisger also quitted shortly after to become a minister, were appointed by the Elector as the dwelling-place of Luther. Here, therefore, Catharine had to manage her household.

Protestant posterity has been anxious to retain a memorial of this marriage in the wedding rings of the newly-married couple. These, however, were probably not used at the marriage itself, since Luther wished to have it solemnised so quickly and without the knowledge of others. But a ring has been preserved, which Luther, to judge from the inscription (D. Martino Luthero Catharina v. Boren 13 Jun.

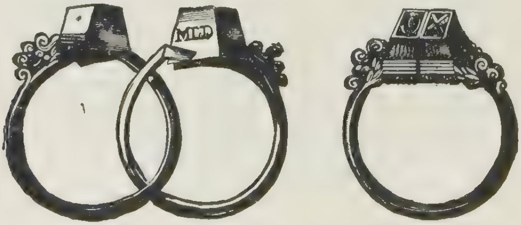

FIG. 32.—LUTHER'S DOUBLE RING.

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[1] The goblet is now in the possession of the University of Greifswald.

1525), received at any rate from his Kate as a supplementary reminiscence of the day. In recent times—about 1817—it has been multiplied by several copies. It bears the figure of the crucified Saviour and the instruments of His death; in perfect keeping with the spirit of the Reformer, whose marriage, like the other acts of his life, was concluded in the name of Christ crucified. There exists also, in the Ducal Museum at Brunswick, a double ring, consisting of two interfastened in the middle, of which one bears a diamond with his initials M. L. D., and the other a ruby with the initials of his wife, C. v. B. The inner surface of the first ring is engraved with the words: 'WAS . GOT . ZUSAMEN . FIEGT,' (Those whom God hath joined together), and the second, 'SOL . KEIN . MENSCH . SCHEIDEN,' (Shall no man put asunder). This double ring was probably given by some friend to Luther, or, as others suppose, to his wife.

PART V.

LUTHER AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH, TO THE FIRST RELIGIOUS PEACE. 1525-1532.

CHAPTER I.

SURVEY.

The year 1525 marks in the life of Luther and the history of the Reformation an epoch and a departure of general importance.

Luther's preaching had originally forced its way among the German people and its various classes, with an energy and strength never counted on by its opponents. It seemed impossible to calculate how far the ferment would extend, and what would be its ultimate results. It was the idea of the Elector Frederick the Wise, now dead, that by simply letting the word of the gospel unfold itself quietly and work its way without hindrance, the truth could not fail eventually to penetrate all Christendom, or at least the Christian world of Germany, and thus accomplish a peaceful victory. This hope had guided him during his lifetime in his relations with Luther, and no one appreciated and responded to it more loyally than Luther himself. But now, as we have seen, those German princes who adhered to the old Church system had begun to form a close alliance, and were meditating means of remedying, albeit in their own fashion, certain evils in the Church. Erasmus, still the representative of a powerful modern movement of the intellect, had at length broken finally with Luther, and renewed his former allegiance to the Romish Church. From the German nobility, whose sympathy and co-operation Luther had once so boldly and hopefully invoked in his contest with the Papacy, it was vain, since the fatal enterprise of Sickingen, which Luther himself had been forced to condemn, to expect any material assistance in furtherance of the Evangelical cause. True, there was the extensive rising of another class, the peasantry, who likewise appealed to the gospel. But genuine disciples of the gospel could not fail to see in this movement, with terror, how a perverse conception of the sacred text led to errors and crimes which even Luther wished to see suppressed in blood. And the Catholic nobles took advantage of this rising to persecute with the greater rigour all evangelical preaching, and to extend, without further inquiry, their denunciation of the insurgents to those of evangelical sympathies who held entirely aloof from the insurrection. Luther, in his dealings with the nobles and peasants, failed to preserve that boldness and confidence of mind and language which he had previously displayed towards his fellow-countrymen. That his cause, indeed, was the cause of God, he remained unshakenly convinced; but in a sadder spirit than he had ever shown before, he left God's will to determine what amount of visible success that cause should attain to in the present evil world, or how far the decision should depend upon His last great Judgment.

Even before the Peasants' War broke out, the proceedings of the fanatics had begun to hamper and disturb his labours in the field of reformation, and had prepared for him much pain and tribulation. He had to grow distrustful of so many whom he had regarded as brothers, and of their manner of proclaiming the Word of God, Whom they pretended to serve. He already heard of men among them, who not only rejected infant baptism, and openly attacked his own, no less than the Catholic doctrine of the Sacrament, but

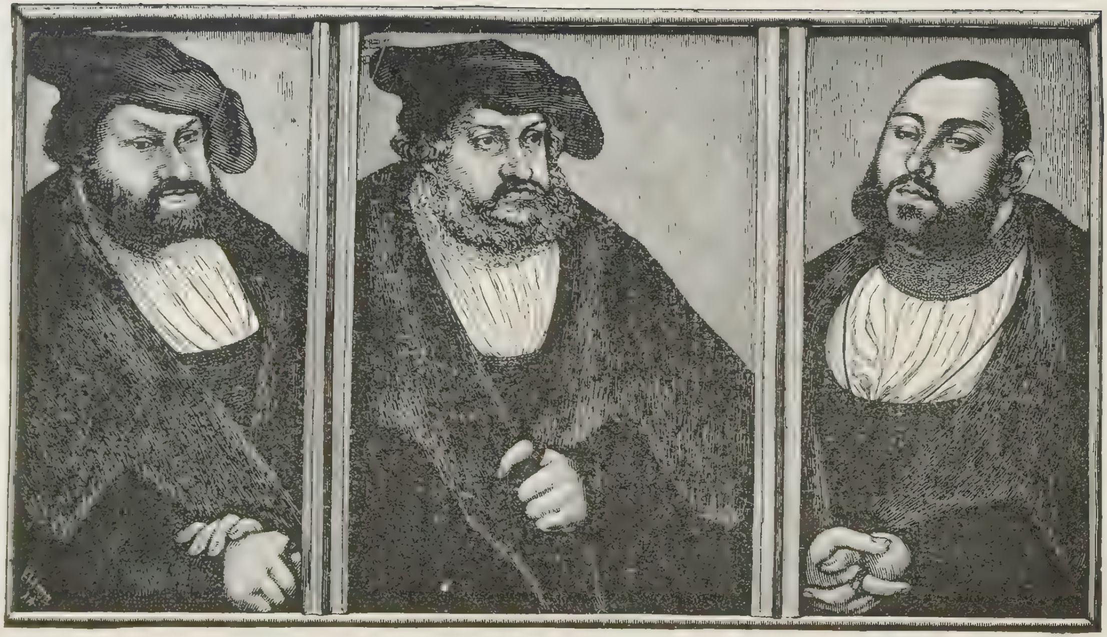


FIG. 33.—The Saxon Electors, FREDERICK the WISE, JOHN, and JOHN FREDERICK.
(From a Picture by Cranach.) At Nüremberg.

who impugned the universal belief of Christendom in the Triune God and the Divinity of the Saviour. Early in 1525 news reached him of such a man at Nüremberg, John Denk, the Rector of the school there, who was expelled on that account by the magistrates. Luther's own doctrine of the presence of Christ's Body in the Lord's Supper, which he had previously to defend against Carlstadt, his former colleague and fellow-combatant, now found a far more formidable opponent in the Zurich Reformer, Ulrich Zwingli. The latter, in a letter of November 16, 1524, to Alber, a preacher at Reutlingen, had already disputed the Real Presence, by interpreting the words 'This *is* my body' to mean 'This *signifies* my body.' In March 1525 he made known this interpretation to the world by publishing his letter, together with a pamphlet 'On the True and False Religion.' He was joined at Basle by Oecolampadius, whom Luther had welcomed formerly as a fellow-labourer, and who published his own interpretation of the words of Christ. Butzer and Capito, the evangelical preachers at Strasburg, inclined to the same view, which threatened to spread rapidly over the South of Germany. The opposition now encountered by Luther was far more dangerous for his

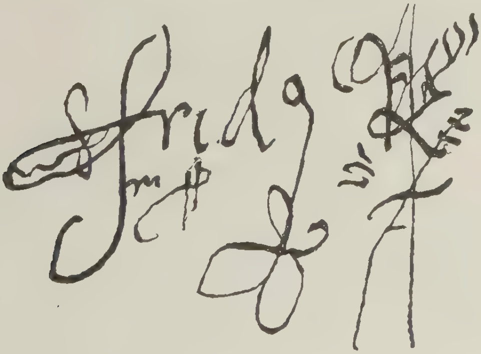


Fig. 34.—Facsimile of Frederick's signature.

teaching than the theories and agitations of a Carlstadt, since whatever judgment may be formed about its merits, it proceeded at any rate from men of far more thoughtful minds, more solid theological acquirements, and more honest reverence for the Word of God. Herewith then began that division of opinion among the ranks of the Evangelical Reformers, which served more than anything else to retard the fresh and vigorous progress of the Reformation, and infected even Luther's spirit with the bitterness of the controversy it entailed.

At the same time, however, Luther had now won firm ground for the Evangelical cause upon a fixed and extensive territory. Within these limits it was possible to construct a new Church system, upon stable foundations and with a new constitution. John, the new Elector of Saxony, did not enjoy, it is true, the same high consideration throughout the Empire as his brother Frederick, Luther's great protector, and he was also his inferior as a statesman. But with Luther himself both he and his son John Frederick had already maintained a friendly personal intercourse, such as his predecessor had carefully avoided. Nor did his disposition lead him, like Frederick, to pay any such regard to the possible preservation of Church unity in the German Empire and Western Christendom; on the contrary, he soon showed his readiness to undertake independently, as sovereign of his country, the establishment of a new Evangelical Church. Prussia had just preceded him in a reform embracing the whole country, under the former Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, their present Duke. The Elector now found a further ally for the work in the Landgrave Philip of Hesse, the most active and politically the most important of all. As a young man of only twenty years of age, in the beginning of 1525, he had rendered valuable service by his energy, resolution, and warlike ability, in the defeat of Sickingen, and again when opposed to the seditious peasants. Already before the Peasants'

War commenced, he had acquired, mainly through Melancthon, whom he had met when travelling, a knowledge and

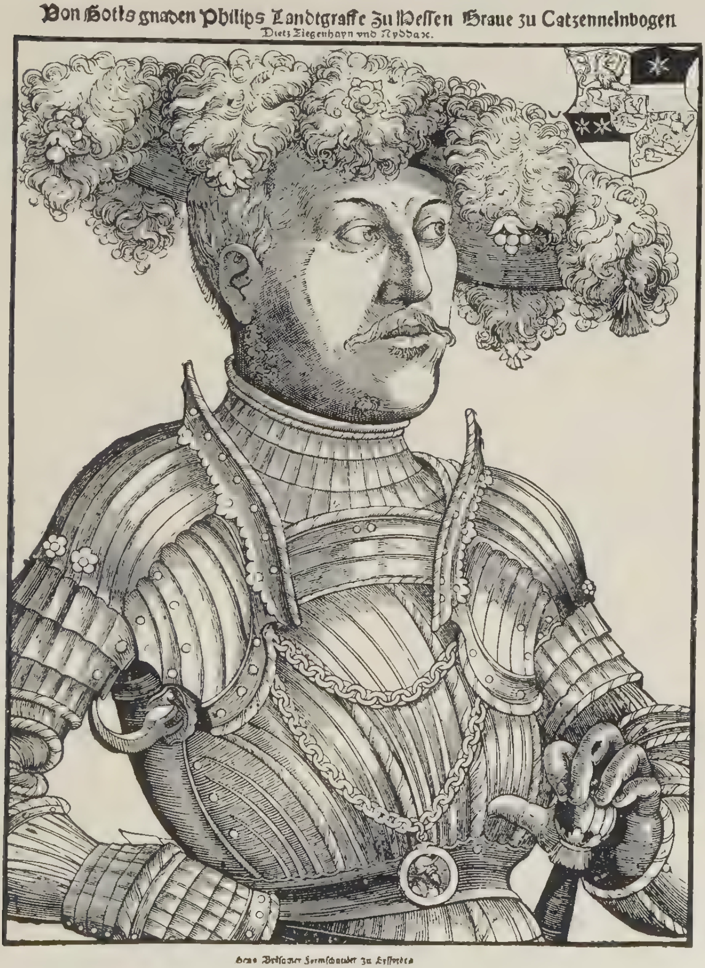

Von Gotts gnaden Philips Landtgraffe Zu Heſſen Graue zu Catzennelnbogen
Dietz Ziegenhayn vnd Nyddax.
Hans Broſamer Formſchneider zu Erffordt

Fig. 35.—Philip of Hesse. (From a woodcut of Brosamer.)

love of the evangelical doctrines. His father-in-law, Duke George of Saxony, had vainly endeavoured, after their common victory over the insurgents, to alienate him from the cause of the hateful Luther, who he said was the author of so much mischief. But the menaces hurled against that cause by the Catholic States of the Empire served only to attach him more closely and loyally to John and John Frederick, and thence resulted in the following spring the League of Torgau, which was joined also by the princes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Anhalt, and Mecklenburg, and the town of Magdeburg. The co-operation of the territorial princes made it possible to procure for the Reformation and its Church system a firm position in the German Empire against the Emperor and the hostile Catholic States. And, at the same time, it offered means for establishing on the ground newly occupied by the Reformation itself, firm and generally recognised regulations of Church polity, and defending them from being disturbed by the proceedings of fanatics.

Under these new conditions and circumstances, Luther's work became limited, as was natural, to a narrower field, and bore no longer the same character of boldness and independence which had marked it in his original contest with Rome. But it required, on this account, all the more perseverance and patience, faithfulness and circumspection in minor matters, and an adequate regard to what was actually required and practicable, while clinging firmly to the lofty aims and objects with which the work of the Reformation had commenced.

To the portrait of Luther as the Reformer we have to add henceforth that of the married man and head of the household, whose single desire is to fulfil, as a man and a Christian, the duties belonging to this state of life, and to enjoy with a quiet conscience the blessings of God. In his letters to intimate friends we find happy home news alternating with the most profound and serious reflections on the conduct and duties of the Evangelical Church, and on abstruse questions of theology. His language as a Reformer deals now no longer, as in his Address to the German Nobility, in particular, with the problems and interests of political and social life; it is mainly to religious and spiritual matters, and to the kindred questions affecting the active work and constitution of the Church, that his mission is now directed. But his personal relations with his countrymen became all the more close and intimate in consequence of this change of life; and that which by many of his friends was regretted as a lowering of his reputation and influence, becomes a valuable and essential feature in the historical portrait now presented to our eyes.

In single dramatic incidents and changes, so to speak, Luther's life henceforth, as was only natural, is no longer so rich as during the earlier years of development and struggle. We shall no longer meet with crises of such a kind as mark a momentous epoch.

CHAPTER II.

CONTINUED LABOURS AND PERSONAL LIFE TO 1529.

Among the particular labours which occupied Luther during the further course of the year 1525, apart from his persevering industry as a professor and preacher, we have already had occasion to mention one, namely, his reply to Erasmus. We find him towards the end of September entirely engrossed in this work. Not a single proposition in Erasmus' book, so he wrote to Spalatin, would he admit.

The reckless severity with which he assailed that distinguished opponent appears all the more remarkable when contrasted with the conciliatory tone whereby he was then hoping to appease the wrath of his two bitterest enemies in high places, King Henry VIII. of England and Duke George of Saxony.

On September 1, 1525, he addressed a humble letter to Henry. King Christian II. of Denmark, who, after forfeiting his throne by his arbitrary and despotic rule, had taken refuge with the Elector Frederick, showed an inclination to favour the new doctrine, and even came in person to Wittenberg. By him Luther was induced to believe—for what reason it does not appear—that Henry VIII. had entirely changed his Church principles ; and to hope that, if only he could make amends for the personal offence he had given him, Henry might be won over still further for the Evangelical cause. Luther refers to this hope as follows : 'My Most Gracious Sire the King gave me good cause to hope for the King of England. . . . and ceased not to urge me by speech and letter, giving me so many good words, and telling me that

I ought to write humbly, and that it would be useful to do so, and so forth, until I am fairly intoxicated with the idea.' He then cast himself in his letter at the feet of his Majesty, and besought him to pardon him for the offence he had given by his earlier pamphlet, 'because from good witnesses he had learned that the Royal treatise which he had attacked, was not indeed the work of the King himself, but a concoction of the miserable Cardinal of York' (Edward Lee). He promised to make a public retractation, in another pamphlet, for the sake of the King's honour. At the same time, he wished that the grace of God might assist his Majesty, and enable him to turn wholly to the gospel, and shut his ears against the siren voices of its enemies.

With regard to Duke George of Saxony, all that Luther had as yet heard about him was that he was incessantly bringing fresh complaints about him to the Elector, that he rigorously excluded the new teaching from his own territory, and, what was more, that he was anxious to go on from the conquest of the peasants to the suppression of Lutheranism, which had been the cause, he declared, of all the mischief. Now, however, Luther learned from certain Saxon nobles, that the Duke himself was not so unfavourably disposed to the cause, and was willing to treat with mildness and toleration those who preached or confessed the gospel; that it was with Luther personally that he was so offended and irritated. Luther wrote to him on December 22 of this year. 'I have been advised,' he says, 'once more to entreat your Grace in this letter, with all humility and friendship, for it almost seems to me as if God, our Lord, would soon take some of us from hence, and the fear is that Duke George and Luther may also have to go.' He then entreats, with all submission, his pardon for whatever wrong he had done the Duke by writing or in speech; but of his doctrine he could, for conscience' sake, retract nothing. Luther, however, did not humble himself to George as he had done to King Henry, and his letter bears his characteristic sharpness of tone. He assured the Duke, however, that, with all his former severity of language towards him, he was a better friend to him than all his sycophants and parasites, and that the Duke had no need to pray to God against him.

Luther undoubtedly wrote the two letters, as he himself says of the one to Henry, with a simple and honest heart. They show, indeed, how much genuine good-nature, and at the same time how strange an ignorance of the world and of men, was combined in him together with a passionate zeal for combat. George answered him at once with ferocity, and, as Luther says, with the coarseness of a peasant. The prince, otherwise not ignoble, was so embittered by hatred against the heretic as to reproach him with the vulgarest motives of avarice, ambition, and the lust of the flesh. Never had Luther, even with his worst enemies, stooped to such personal slander. Concerning the answer which came afterwards from King Henry, as well as the reply of Erasmus, we shall speak further on.

Meanwhile, Luther and his friends were directing their attention to the newly published doctrine of the Last Supper. At first Luther left others to contest it: Bugenhagen addressed a public letter against it to his friend Hess at Breslau; Brenz at Schwäbish Hall, together with other Swabian preachers, published tracts against Oecolampadius. Luther himself, after February 1525, referred repeatedly to Zwingli's theory in sermons to the congregation at Wittenberg which were printed at the time. But beyond this he confined himself to sending warnings by letter, on November 5, 1525, and January 4, 1526, to Strasburg and Reutlingen, whence he had been appealed to on the subject, against the false doctrines which had been put forward concerning the Sacrament, and particularly against the fanatics. We shall follow later on the further course of the controversy.

All these polemics, however, were only an adjunct to his positive labours and activity. His chief task now was to carry out the work he had begun in his own Church. For this he could rely with certainty on the inward sympathy of the new Elector, and he hastened to turn it actively to account as soon as possible, for the furtherance of his Church objects. During his communications with the late Elector Frederick, Spalatin had always acted as intermediary; but to John he addressed himself direct, and, whenever occasion offered, by word of mouth, and this at times with much urgency. Spalatin was now the pastor of a parish, as had been his wish some time before. He was the successor at Altenburg of Link, who had removed to Nüremberg, and he enjoyed the especial confidence of John.

In his official capacity Luther was, and always remained, before all things, a member of the university. He cherished at all times a lively appreciation of its importance to the cause of evangelical truth, the Church, and the common welfare of society. He began by pleading on its behalf to the new Elector, to remedy the defects and grievances which had crept in during the latter years of the old and ailing Elector Frederick. The requisite salary, in particular, was wanting for several of the professorships, and the customary lectures on many branches of study had been dropped. Luther, as he himself afterwards told the Elector in a tone of apology, had 'worried him sorely to put the university in order,' so much so that 'his urgency wellnigh surprised the Elector, as though he had not much faith in his promises.' In September the necessary reforms at Wittenberg were provided for by a commission specially appointed by the prince. The interest the latter took in theology made him double Melancthon's salary, in order to attach him the more closely to the theological lectures, which originally were not part of his duty.

Luther next devoted all his energies towards the requirements of the new Church system.

At Wittenberg, and from thence in other places, regulations for the performance of public worship had already been established, with the object of giving full and free expression to evangelical truth. The congregation had the Word of God read aloud to them, and joined in the singing of German hymns. The portions of the Liturgy, however, which were sung partly by the priests and partly by the choir, were still conducted in Latin. Luther now introduced a complete service in German, changing here and there the old form. To assist him in the musical alterations required, the Elector sent him two musicians from Torgau. With one of these in particular, John Walter, Luther worked with diligence, and continued afterwards on terms of friendly intercourse. He himself composed a few pieces for the work.

Of these, as of the earlier regulations at Wittenberg, Luther published a formal account. It appeared at the beginning of the next year (1526), under the title of 'The German Mass and Order of Divine Worship at Wittenberg.' But he guarded himself in this publication, from the outset, against the new Service being construed into a law of necessary obligation, or made a means of disquieting the conscience. In this matter, as in others, he wished above all things that regard should be paid to the weak and simple brethren—to those who had still to be trained and built up into Christians. Nay, he had meant it for a people among whom, as he said, many were not Christians at all, but the majority stood and stared, for the mere sake of seeing something new, just as though a Christian Service were being performed among Turks and heathens. The first question with these was how to attract them publicly to a confession of belief and Christianity. He thought also, at this time, of another and, as he termed it, a true kind of Evangelical Service, for which, however, the people were not yet prepared. His idea in this was that all individuals who were Christians in earnest, and were willing to confess the gospel, should enrol themselves by name, and meet together for prayer, for reading the Word of God, for administering the Sacraments, and exercising works of Christian piety. For an assembly of this kind, and for their worship of God, he contemplated no elaborate form of Liturgy, but, on the contrary, simply a 'short and proper' means of 'directing all in common to the Word and prayer and charity,' and in addition thereto, a regular exercise of congregational discipline and a Christian care of the poor, after the example of the Apostles. But for the present, he said, he must resign this idea of a congregation simply from the want of proper persons to compose it. He would wait 'until Christians were found sufficiently earnest about the Word to offer themselves for the purpose, and adhere to it;' otherwise it might serve only to generate a 'spirit of faction,' if he attempted to carry it through by himself; for the Germans, he said, were a wild people, and very difficult to deal with, unless extreme necessity compelled them. The Elector, however, readily assented to this project, and purposed to propose it as a model for other churches in his dominions.

At this point, however, a wider field of action opened out, the details of which could not be comprehended at a single glance, and which seemed to require a higher care, and the guidance and support of higher powers and authorities. In many places, nothing as yet, or at all events nothing of a stable and well-ordered kind, had been done towards a reconstruction of the Church and the satisfaction of spiritual requirements in an evangelical sense. There was no collective Church, and no ecclesiastical office existing by whose influence and authority reforms might have been made, and a new organisation established. This was a grievous state of need where, perhaps, the existing clergy and the majority or the flower of their congregations were already unanimous and decided in their confession of evangelical doctrine. And in a number of congregations, indeed, among the great mass of the country people, there prevailed to a peculiar degree, that want of understanding, of ripe thought, and of inward sympathy, which Luther noticed even among many of his Wittenbergers. The bishops, in their visitations in Saxony under the Elector Frederick, had been unable to check any longer the progress of the new teaching, and did not venture on any further interference. And yet this teaching, as Luther knew better than anyone, had not yet succeeded, in spite of all its popularity, in penetrating the souls of men. To a large extent, the masses seemed to be still stolid and indifferent. Even among the clergy, many were so unstable, so obscure, and so incompetent, that they failed to make any progress with their congregations. There were even some among them who were ready, according to circumstances, to adopt either the old or the new Church usages. In some places the new practices were opposed as innovations, especially by various nobles, and by the priests, who were dependent on the nobles: if such opposition was to be broken, it could only be done by the authority and power of the local sovereign. Lastly, and apart from all this, the new Church system was threatened with imminent disturbance and dissolution from the insufficiency or misuse of the funds required for its support. The customary revenues were falling off; payments were no longer made for private masses; and many of the nobles, including even those who remained attached to the old system, began to secularise the property of the Church. 'Unless measures are taken,' said Luther, 'to secure a suitable disposition and proper maintenance for ministers and preachers, there will shortly be neither parsonages nor schools worth speaking of, and Divine Worship and the Word of God will come utterly to an end.'

The first question was to establish the principles on which a new organisation of the Church should be based.

The earlier opinions expressed by Luther, especially in his Address to the German Nobility, might have led one to expect that the new Church system conformably to his ideas would have to be built up, to use a modern expression, from below, that is to say, on the basis of the universal priesthood of all baptized Christians, who should now therefore, after hearing and receiving the Word of the Gospel, have proceeded to organise and embody themselves into a new community. Luther had also, in that treatise, as we have seen, allotted certain duties to the civil authorities in regard even to ecclesiastical matters; and it was now from profound and painful conviction that he confessed that the great bulk of the people were as yet not genuine Christians, but needed public means of attraction to draw them to Christianity. Later on we met with his idea of a 'German Mass,' involving a voluntary union and assembly of genuine Christians, as explained by him three years before in a sermon. There were elements here at least, one might have thought, sufficient to constitute an independent system of congregations. Shortly afterwards, in October 1526, a Hessian synod, convoked by the Landgrave Philip at Homberg, actually adopted the draft of a constitution, which provided that those Christians who acknowledged the Word of God should voluntarily enrol themselves as members of a Christian Evangelical Brotherhood or congregation, who should elect in assembly their pastors and bishops, and that the latter, together with other deputies, should constitute a general synod for the national Church. But Luther, true to his conviction, previously expressed, that there were not the men fitted for such an institution, stated now his opinion to Philip, that he had not the boldness to carry out such a heap of regulations, and that people were not as fit for them as those who sat and made the regulations imagined. Moreover he could not tolerate the idea that the mass of those who remained outside this community, and who were looked upon, according to the Homberg scheme, as heathens, should be left to their fate, without preachers of the Word, and above all, without either baptism or the Christian education of their children. Added to this, he adhered strenuously to his belief, which we have noticed long before, that certain duties with reference to religion and the Church were incumbent on the civil authorities, the princes and magistrates, in common with all the rest of Christendom. It was their duty, he declared in those earlier writings of his, to prohibit, by force if necessary, the proceedings of those priests who were hostile to the gospel. He now applied the idea and definition of external, idolatrous practices to the Papal system of public worship and the sacrifice of the mass. To suppress these practices, he said, was the duty of those authorities who watched over the external relations of life: such was his demand against the Catholics at Altenburg. On the other hand, this province of external life and external regulations embraced also the material means required for the external maintenance of the Church. And it was only a step further for those authorities to forbid any public exposition of doctrines which they found to be at variance with the Word of God, and to appoint also preachers of that Word; nay, to undertake, in short, the establishment and preservation of the constitution of the Church, so far as the same was external, and necessary, and incapable of being established by any other power. The Elector John himself had already, on August 16, 1525, announced at his palace of Weimar to the assembled clergy of the district, 'that the gospel should be preached, pure and simple, without any additions by man.'

Under such circumstances, and starting with such views, Luther now urged the Elector to take in hand a comprehensive regulation of the Church. As soon as he had discharged his duties at the university and completed his new Church Service in German, he turned his efforts to a general 'Reform of parishes.' This, as he said in a letter at the end of September, was now the stumbling-block before him. On October 31, 1525, the anniversary of his ninety-five theses, he represented to the Elector that, now that the reorganisation of the university and the regulation of public worship had been completed, there still remained two points which demanded the attention and care of his Highness, as the supreme temporal authority in his country. One of these was the miserable condition of the parishes in general; the other was the proposal that the Elector, as Luther had already advised him at Wittenberg, should institute an inspection also of the civil administration of his councillors and officials, about which there were everywhere complaints both in the towns and country districts. With regard to the first point, he went on to explain, on receiving a gracious reply from the Elector, that the people who wished to have an evangelical preacher should themselves be made to contribute the additional income required; and he proposed that the country should be divided into four or five districts, each of which should be visited by two commissioners appointed by the prince. He then proceeded to consider the external maintenance of the parochial clergy, and the means necessary for that purpose. He suggested further that ministers advanced in years, or unfit to preach, but otherwise of pious life and conduct, should be instructed to read aloud, in person or by deputy, the Gospel, together with the Postills or short homilies. With regard to those parishes where the appointment of an evangelical preacher was a matter of indifference or of actual repugnance, he expressed at present no opinion; but in his later proposals he assumed the establishment of evangelical preachers throughout the country. He expresses his conviction that the Elector will give his services to God in these reforms of the Church, as a faithful instrument in His hands, 'because,' as he says, 'your Highness is entreated and demanded to do so by us, and by the pressing need itself, and, therefore, assuredly by God.'

Readily as the Elector John listened to Luther's words and exhortations, he found it difficult, nevertheless, to initiate at once so vast an undertaking as was imposed upon him. Luther was well aware, as he himself told John, that matters of importance might easily be delayed at court, 'through the overwhelming press of business;' and that princely households had much to do, and it was necessary to importune them perseveringly. He knew his prince—that with the best will possible, he was not energetic enough with those about him; and among the latter he suspected that many were indifferent and selfish with regard to matters of religion and the Church. The task, however, that now lay before him, was even more difficult and involved than Luther himself had imagined when first shaping and propounding his idea.

A whole year went by before the project was taken up comprehensively. Only in the district of Borna, in January 1526, was an inspection of parishes effected by Spalatin and a civil official of the prince; and another one was held during Lent in the Thuringian district of Tenneberg, in which Luther's friend Myconius of Gotha, afterwards one of the most prominent Reformers in Thuringia, took an active part. Meantime, however, the clergy in general received directions from the Elector to perform public worship in the manner prescribed by Luther's 'German Mass.'

In the course of the summer the development of the general affairs of the Empire enabled the desired co-operation of the civil authorities in the work of Reformation to be established on a basis of law. And yet, just now, the situation, as regards the Evangelical cause, had become more critical than at any previous time since the Diet of Worms. For the Emperor Charles had terminated, by a brilliant victory, the war with France, which had compelled him to let his Edict remain dormant; and the peace concluded with the captured King Francis, in January 1526, at Madrid, was designated by the two monarchs as being intended to enable them to take up their Christian arms in common for the expulsion of the infidels and the extirpation of the Lutheran and other heresies. The Emperor issued an admonition to certain princes of Germany, bidding them take measures accordingly, and a number of them held a conference together on the subject. Against the danger thus threatening, the Evangelical party formed the League of Torgau. But no sooner was King Francis at liberty and back in France, than he broke the peace so solemnly contracted. Pope Clement, to whom this peace had offered such a splendid prospect of purifying and uniting Christendom, set more store by his political interests and temporal possessions in Italy, which formed a subject of such jealous rivalry and contention between himself, the Emperor, and the King. Terrified at the overwhelming power of the Emperor, the Holy Father made use of his Divine credentials to absolve the French king from his oath, and himself concluded a warlike alliance with him against Charles, which went by the name of the 'Holy League.' Myconius remarked of this compact that 'whatever Popes do must be called most holy, for so holy are they that even God, the Gospel, and all the world, must lie at their feet.' Meanwhile, the Turks from the East were advancing on Germany. Thus it came to pass that a Diet at Spires, which seemed originally to have been summoned for the final execution of the Edict of Worms, led to the Imperial Recess of August 27, 1526, wherein it was declared that until the General, or at least National Council of the Church, which was prayed for, should be convoked, each State should, in all matters appertaining to the Edict of Worms, 'so live, rule, and bear itself as it thought it could answer it to God and the Emperor.'

Luther now turned again, on November 22, 1526, to John, 'not having laid for a long while any supplication before his Electoral Highness.' The peasants, he said, were so unruly, and so ungrateful for the Word of God, that he had almost a mind to let them go on living like pigs, without a preacher, only their poor young children, at any rate, must be cared for. He laid down in this letter some important principles concerning the duty of the civil power and the State. The prince, he declared, was the supreme guardian of the young, and of all who required his protection. All towns and villages that could afford the means, should be compelled to keep schools and preachers, just as they were compelled to pay taxes for bridges, roads, and other local requirements. In support of this demand, he appealed to the direct command of God, and to the universal state of destitution prevailing. If that duty were neglected, the country would be full of vagrant savages. With regard to the convents and other religious foundations, he stated that, as soon as the Papal yoke had been removed from the land, they would pass over to the prince as the supreme head; and it would then become his duty, however onerous, to regulate such matters, since no one else would have the power to do so. He particularly warned the Elector not to allow the nobles to appropriate the property of the convents, 'as is talked of already, and as some of them are actually doing.' They were founded, he said, for the service of God: whatever was superfluous might be applied by the Elector to the exigencies of the state or the relief of the poor. To his friends Luther complained with grief and bitterness of some courtiers of the Elector, who after having always shut their ears to religion and the gospel, were now chuckling over the rich spoils in prospect, and laughing at evangelical liberty.

The work now commenced in real earnest. The Elector had the necessary regulations prepared at Wittenberg, at a conference between his chancellor Brück, Luther, and others. In February 1527 visitors were appointed, and among them was Melancthon. They began their labours at once in the district to which Wittenberg belonged, but of their proceedings here nothing further is known. In July the first visitation on a large scale took place in Thuringia.

Just at this time, however, Luther was overtaken by severe bodily suffering and also by troubles at home, while the visitation and the academical life at Wittenberg had to experience an interruption.

Luther's first year of married life had been one of happiness. Symptoms of a physical disorder, the stone, had appeared, however, even then, and in after years became extremely painful and dangerous.

On June 7, 1526, as he announced to his friend Rühel, his 'dear Kate brought him, by the great mercy of God, a little Hans Luther,'—her firstborn. With joy and thankfulness, as he says in another letter, they now reaped the fruit and blessings of married life, whereof the Pope and his creatures were not worthy.

Amidst all his various labours in theology and for the Church, and in preparing for the visitation, he took his share in the cares of his household, laid out the garden attached to his quarters at the convent, had a well made, and ordered seeds from Nüremberg through his friend Link, and radishes from Erfurt. He wrote at the same time to Link for tools for turning, which he wished to practise with his servant Wolf or Wolfgang Sieberger, as the 'Wittenberg barbarians' were too much behind in the art; and he was anxious, in case the world should no longer care to maintain him as a minister of the Word, to learn how to gain a livelihood by his handiwork.

Early in January 1527 he was seized with a sudden rush of blood to the heart. It nearly proved fatal at the moment, but fortunately soon passed away. An attack of illness, accompanied by deep oppression and anxiety of mind, and the effects of which long remained, followed on July 6. On the morning of that day, being seized with anguish of the soul, he sent for his faithful friend and confessor Bugenhagen, listened to his words of comfort from the Bible, and with persevering prayer commended himself and his beloved ones to God. At Bugenhagen's advice, he then went to a breakfast, to which the Elector's hereditary marshal, Hans Löser, had invited him. He ate little at the meal, but was as cheerful as possible to his companions. After it was over, he sought to refresh himself with conversation with Jonas in his garden, and invited him and his wife to spend the evening at his home. On their arrival, however, he complained of a rushing and singing noise, like the waves of the sea, in his left ear, and which afterwards shot through his head with intolerable pain, like a tremendous gust of wind. He wished to go to bed, but fainted away by the door of his bedroom, after calling aloud for water. Cold water having been poured upon him, he revived. He began to pray aloud, and talked earnestly of spiritual things, although a short swoon came over him in the interval. The physician Augustin Schurf, who was called in, ordered his body, now quite cold, to be warmed. Bugenhagen too was sent for again. Luther thanked the Lord for having vouchsafed to him the knowledge of His holy Name; God's will be done, whether He would let him die, which would be a gain to himself, or allow him to live on still longer in the flesh, and work. He called his friends to witness that up to his end he was certain of having taught the truth according to the command of God. He assured his wife, with words of comfort, that in spite of all the gossip of the blind world she was his wife, and he exhorted her to rest solely on God's Word. He then asked, 'Where is my darling little Hans?' The child smiled at his father, who commended him with his mother to the God who is the Father of the fatherless and judges the cause of the widow. He pointed to some silver cups which had been given him, and which he wished to leave his wife. 'You know,' he added, 'we have nothing else.' After a profuse perspiration he grew better, and the next day he was able to get up to meals. He said afterwards that he thought he was dying, in the hands of his wife and his friends, but that the spiritual paroxysm which had preceded had been something far more difficult for him to bear.

Luther, after recovering from this attack, still complained of weakness in the head, and his inward oppression and spiritual anguish was renewed and became intensified. On August 2 he told Melancthon, who was then busy with his visitation in Thuringia, that he had been tossed about for more than a week in the agonies of death and hell, and that his limbs still trembled in consequence.

Whilst he was still in this state of suffering, news came that the plague was approaching Wittenberg, nay, had actually broken out in the town. It is well known how this fearful scourge had repeatedly raged in Germany, and how ruinous it had been, from the panic which preceded and accompanied it. The university, from fear of the epidemic, was now removed to Jena.

Luther resolved, however, together with Bugenhagen, whom he was assisting as preacher, to remain loyally with the congregation, who now more than ever required his spiritual aid; although his Elector wrote in person to him saying, 'We should for many reasons, as well as for your own good, be loth to see you separated from the university. . . . Do us then the favour.' He wrote to a friend, 'We are not alone here; but Christ, and your prayers, and the prayers of all the saints, together with the holy angels, are with us.'

The plague had really broken out, though not with that violence which the universal panic would have led one to suppose. Luther soon counted eighteen corpses, which were buried near his house at the Elster Gate. The epidemic advanced from the Fishers' suburb into the centre of the town: here the first victim carried off by it, died almost in Luther's arms - the wife of the burgomaster Tilo Denes. To his friends elsewhere Luther sent comforting reports, and repressed all exaggerated accounts. His friend Hess at Breslau asked him 'if it was befitting a Christian man to fly when death threatened him.' Luther answered him in a public letter, setting forth the whole duty of Christians in this respect. Of the students, a few at any rate remained at Wittenberg. For these he now began a new course of lectures.

Luther's spiritual sufferings continued to afflict him for several months, and until the close of the year. Though he had known them, he said, from his youth, he could never have expected that they would prove so severe. He found them very similar to those attacks and struggles which he had had to endure in early life. The invasion of the plague, and the parting from all his intimate friends except Bugenhagen, must have contributed to increase them.

He was just now deeply shocked and agitated by the news of the death of a faithful companion in the faith, the Bavarian minister Leonard Käser or Kaiser, who was publicly burnt on August 16, 1527, in the town of Scherding. Luther broke out, as he had done after Henry of Zütphen's martyrdom, into a lamentation of his own unworthiness compared with such heroes. He published an account of Leonard and his end, which had been sent him by Michael Stiefel, adding a preface and conclusion of his own. About the same time he composed a consolatory tract for the Evangelical congregation at Halle-on-the-Saale, whose minister Winkler had been murdered in the previous April.

In the autumn a new controversial treatise was published against him by Erasmus, which he rightly described as a product of snakes; and he now stood in the midst of the contest between Zwingli and Oecolampadius. He exclaimed once in a letter to Jonas, 'O that Erasmus and the Sacramentarians (Zwingli and his friends) could only for a quarter of an hour know the misery of my heart. I am certain that they would then honestly be converted. Now my enemies live, and are mighty, and heap sorrow on sorrow upon me, whom God has already crushed to the earth.'

The pestilence soon reached his friends. The wife of the physician Schurf, who was then living in the same house with him, was attacked by it, and only recovered slowly towards the beginning of November. At the parsonage the wife of the chaplain or deacon George Rörer succumbed to it on November 2, whereupon Luther took Bugenhagen and his family from the panic-stricken house into his own dwelling. But soon after dangerous symptoms showed themselves with a friend, Margaret Mocha, who was then staying with Luther's family, and she was actually ill unto death. His own wife was then near her confinement. Luther was the more concerned about her, as Rörer's wife, when in the same condition, had sickened and died. But Frau Luther remained, as he says, firm in the faith, and retained her health. Finally, towards the end of October his little son Hans fell ill, and for twelve whole days would not eat. When the anniversary of the ninety-five theses came round again, Luther wrote to Amsdorf telling him of these troubles and anxieties, and concluded with the words: 'So now there are struggles without and terror within. . . It is a comfort which we must set against the malice of Satan, that we have the Word of God, whereby to save the souls of the faithful, even though the devil devour their bodies. . . Pray for us, that we may endure bravely the hand of the Lord, and overcome the power and craft of the devil, whether it be through death or life. Amen. Wittenberg: All Saints' Day, the tenth anniversary of the death-blow to indulgences, in thankful remembrance whereof we are now drinking a toast.'

A short time afterwards Luther was able to send Jonas somewhat better news about the sickness at home, though he was still sighing with deep inward oppression; 'I suffer,' he said, 'the wrath of God, because I have sinned in His sight. Pope, Emperor, princes, bishops, and all the world hate me, and, as if that were not enough, my brethren too (he means the Sacramentarians) must needs afflict me. My sins, death, Satan with all his angels—all rage unceasingly; and what could comfort me if Christ were to forsake me, for Whose sake they hate me? But He will never forsake the poor sinner.' Then follow the words above quoted about Erasmus and the Sacramentarians.

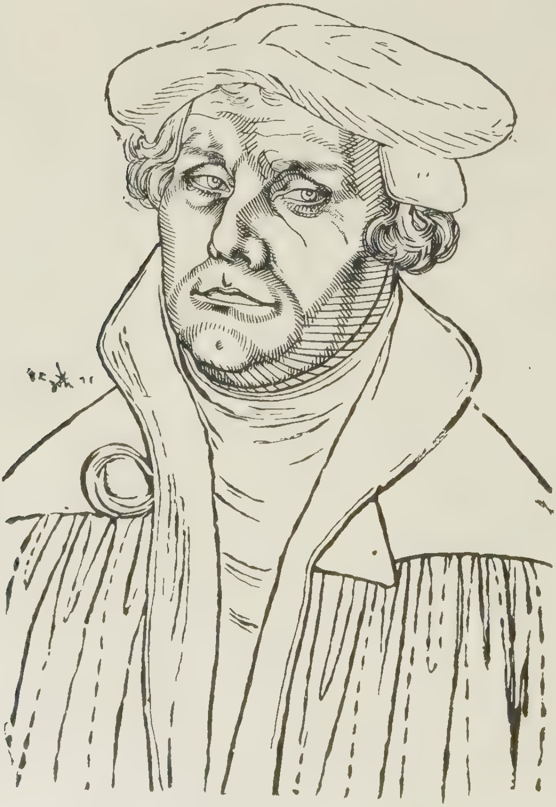


FIG. 36.—LUTHER.
(From a Portrait by Cranach in 1528, at Berlin.)

Towards the middle of December the plague gradually abated. Luther writes from home on the tenth of that month: 'My little boy is well and happy again. Schurf's wife has recovered, Margaret has escaped death in a marvellous manner. We have offered up five pigs, which have died, on behalf of the sick.' And on his return home this day to dinner from his lecture, his wife was safely delivered of a little daughter, who received the name of Elizabeth.

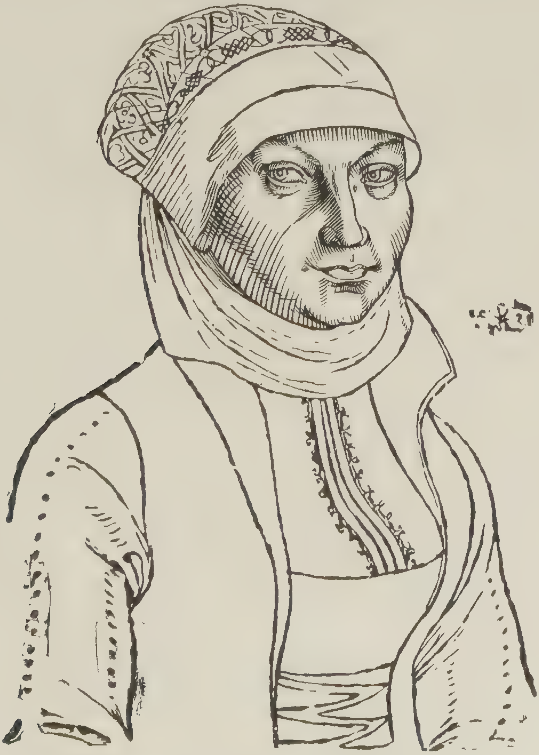


FIG. 37.—LUTHER'S WIFE.
(From a Portrait by Cranach in 1528, at Berlin.)

To his own inward sufferings Luther rose superior by the strengthening power of the conviction that even in these his Lord and Saviour was with him, and that God had sent them for his own good and that of others; that is to say, for his own discipline and humbling. He applied to himself the words of St. Paul, 'As dying, and behold we live;' nay, he wished not to be freed of his burden, should his God and Saviour be glorified thereby.

Luther's famous hymn, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, appeared for the first time, as has been recently proved, in a little hymn-book, about the beginning of the following year. We can see in it indeed a proof how anxious was that time for Luther. It corresponds with his words, already quoted, on the anniversary of the Reformation.

With the cessation of the pestilence and the return of his friends, the new year seems to have brought him also a salutary change in his physical condition; for his sufferings, which were caused by impeded circulation, became sensibly diminished.

Since the outbreak, and during the continuance of the plague, the work of Church visitation had been suspended. Melancthon, however, who had followed the university to Jena, was commissioned meanwhile to prepare provisionally some regulations and instructions for further action in this matter, and in August Luther received the articles which he had drafted for his examination and approval.

These articles or instructions comprised the fundamental principles of Evangelical doctrine, as they were henceforth to be accepted by the congregations. They were drawn up with especial regard to the 'rough common man,' who too often seemed deficient in the first rudiments of Christian faith and life, and with regard also to many of those confessing the new teaching, who, as Melancthon perceived, were not unfairly accused of allowing the word of saving faith to be made a 'cloak of maliciousness,' and who filled their sermons rather with attacks against the

Pope than with words of edifying purport. Melancthon said on this point, 'those who fancy they have conquered the Pope, have not really conquered the Pope.' And whilst teaching that those who were troubled about their sins had only to have faith in their forgiveness for the merits of Christ, to be justified in the sight of God and to find comfort and peace, nevertheless, he would have the people earnestly and specially reminded that this faith could not exist without true repentance and the fear of God; that such comfort could only be felt where such fear was present, and that to achieve this end God's law, with its demands and threats of punishment, would effectually operate upon the soul.

Luther himself had taught very explicitly, and in accordance with his own experience of life, that the faith which saves through God's joyful message of grace could only arise in a heart already bowed and humbled by the law of God, and, having arisen, was bound to employ itself actively in fruits of repentance; although, in stating this doctrine, he had not perhaps so equally adjusted the conditions, as Melancthon had here done. An outcry, however, now arose from among the Romanists, that Melancthon no longer ventured to uphold the Lutheran doctrine; of course it suited their interests to fling a stone in this manner at Luther and his teaching. But what was far more important, an attack was raised against Melancthon from the circle of his immediate friends. Agricola of Eisleben, for instance, would not hear of a repentance growing out of such impressions produced by the Law and the fear of punishment. The conversion of the sinner, he declared, must proceed solely and entirely from the comforting knowledge of God's love and grace, as revealed in His message to man: thence, further, and thence alone, came the proper fear of God, a fear, not of His punishment, but of Himself. This distinction he had failed to find in Melancthon's Instructions. It was the first time that a dogmatic dispute threatened to break out among those who had hitherto stood really united on the common ground of Lutheran doctrine.

Luther, on the contrary, approved Melancthon's draft, and found little to alter in it. What his opponents said did not disturb him; he quieted the doubts of the Elector on that score. Whoever undertook anything in God's cause, he said, must leave the devil his tongue to babble and tell lies against it. He was particularly pleased that Melancthon had 'set forth all in such a simple manner for the common people.' Fine distinctions and niceties of doctrine were out of place in such a work. Even Agricola, who wished to be more Lutheran than Luther himself, was silenced.

Melancthon's work, after having been subjected by the Elector to full scrutiny and criticism in several quarters, was published by his command in March 1528, with a preface written by Luther, as 'Instructions of the Visitors to the parish priests in the Electorate of Saxony.' In this preface Luther pointed out how important and necessary for the Church was such a supervision and visitation. He explained, as the reason why the Elector undertook this office and sent out visitors, that since the bishops and archbishops had proved faithless to their duty, no one else had been found whose special business it was, or who had any orders to attend to such matters. Accordingly, the local sovereign, as the temporal authority ordained by God, had been requested to render this service to the gospel, out of Christian charity, since, in his capacity as civil ruler, he was under no obligation to do so. In like manner, Luther afterwards described the Evangelical sovereigns as 'Makeshift-bishops' (*Nothbischöfe*). At the same time the instructions for visitation introduced now in the smaller districts the office of superintendent as one of permanent supervision.

In the course of the summer preparations were made for a visitation on a large scale, embracing the whole country. The original intention had been to deal, by means of one commission, with the various districts in rotation. Such a course would have necessarily entailed, as was admitted, much delay and other inconveniences. A more comprehensive method was accordingly adopted, of letting different commissions work simultaneously in the different districts. Each of these commissions consisted of a theologian and a few laymen, jurists, and councillors of state, or other officials. Luther was appointed head of the commission for the Electoral district. The work was commenced earlier in some districts than in others. Luther's commission was the first to begin, on October 22, and apparently in the diocese of Wittenberg.

Luther had already, since May 12, voluntarily undertaken a new and onerous labour. Bugenhagen had left Wittenberg that day for the town of Brunswick, where, at the desire of the local magistracy, he carried out the work of reform in the Church, until his departure in October for the same purpose to Hamburg, where he remained until the following June. Luther undertook his pastoral duties in his absence, and preached regularly three or four times in the week. Nevertheless, he took his share also in the work of visitation; the district assigned to him did not take him very far away from Wittenberg. He remained there, actively engaged in this work, during the following months, and with some few intervals, up to the spring. From the end of January 1529 he again suffered for some weeks from giddiness and a rushing noise in his head; he knew not whether it was exhaustion or the buffeting of Satan, and entreated his friends for their prayers on his behalf, that he might continue steadfast in the faith.

The shortcomings and requirements brought to light by the visitation corresponded to what Luther had expected. In his own district the state of things was comparatively favourable; happily, a third of the parishes had the Elector for their patron, and in the towns the magistrates had, to some extent at least, fulfilled their duties satisfactorily. The clergy, for the most part, were good enough for the slender demands with which, under existing circumstances, their parishioners had to be content. But things were worse in many other parts of the country. A gross example of the rude ignorance then prevailing, not only among the country people, but even among the clergy, was found in a village near Torgau, where the old priest was hardly able to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, but was in high reputation far and near as an exorcist, and did a brisk business in that line. Priests had frequently to be ejected for gross immorality, drunkenness, irregular marriages, and such like offences ; many of them had to be forbidden to keep beer-houses, and otherwise to practise worldly callings. On the other hand, we hear of scarcely any priests so addicted to the Romish system as to put difficulties in the way of the visitors. Poverty and destitution, so Luther reports, were found everywhere. The worst feature was the primitive ignorance of the common people, not only in the country but partly also in the towns. We are told of one place where the peasants did not know a single prayer ; and of another, where they refused to learn the Lord's Prayer, because it was too long. Village schools were universally rare. The visitors had to be satisfied if the children were taught the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments by the clerk. A knowledge of these at least was required for admission to the Communion.

Luther in the course of his visitations mixed freely with the people, in the practical, energetic, and hearty manner so peculiar to himself.

For the clergy, who needed a model for their preaching, and for the congregations to whom their pastors, owing to their own incompetence, had to preach the sermons of others, nothing more suitable for this purpose could be offered than Luther's Church-Postills. Its use, where necessary, was recommended. It had shortly before been completed; that is to say, after Luther in 1525 had finished the portion for the winter half-year, his friend Roth, of Zwickau, brought out in 1527 a complete edition of sermons for the Sundays of the summer half-year, and all the feast-days and holidays, compiled from printed copies and manuscripts of detached sermons.

The most urgent task, however, that Luther now felt himself bound to perform, was the compilation of a Catechism suitable for the people, and, above all, for the young. Four years before, he had endeavoured to encourage friends to write one. His 'German Mass' of 1526 said: 'The first thing wanted for German public worship is a rough, simple, good Catechism;' and further on in that treatise he declared that he knew of no better way of imparting such Christian instruction, than by means of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, for they summed up, briefly and simply, almost all that was necessary for a Christian to know.

He now took in hand at once, early in 1529, and amidst all the business of the visitations, a larger work, which was intended to instruct the clergy how to understand and explain those three main articles of the faith, and also the doctrines of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This work is his so-called 'Greater Catechism,' originally entitled simply the 'German Catechism.'

Shortly afterwards followed the 'Little Catechism,'—called also the 'Enchiridion'—which contains in an abbreviated form, adapted to children and simple understandings, the contents of his larger work, set out here in the form of question and answer. 'I have been induced and compelled,' says Luther in his introduction, 'to compress this Catechism, or Christian teaching, into this modest and simple form, by the wretched and lamentable state of spiritual destitution which I have recently in my visitations found to prevail among the people. God help me! how much misery have I seen! The common folk, especially the villagers, know absolutely nothing of Christian doctrine, and alas, many of the parish priests are almost too ignorant or incapable to teach them!' He entreats therefore his brother clergymen to take pity on the people, to assist in bringing home the Catechism to them, and more particularly to the young; and to this end, if no better way commended itself, to take these forms before them, and explain them word by word.

For the use of the pastors, he added to this Catechism a short tract on Marriage, and in the second edition, which followed immediately after, he subjoined a reprint of his treatise on Baptism, which he had published three years before.

The Catechism met the requirements of simple minds and of a Christian's ordinary daily life, by providing also forms of prayer for rising, going to bed, and eating, and lastly a manual for households, with Scriptural texts for all classes. This ends with the words—

Let each his lesson learn to spell,
And then his house will prosper well.

To the clergy, in particular, Luther addressed himself, that they might imbue the people in this manner with Christian truth. But he wished also, as he said, to instruct every head of a household how to 'set forth that truth simply and clearly to his servants,' and teach them to pray, and to thank God for His blessings.

The contents of the Catechism were carefully confined to the highest, simplest, and thoroughly practical truths of Christian teaching, without any trace or feature of polemics. In its composition, as for instance, in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, and in his small prayers above mentioned, he availed himself of old materials. How excellently this Catechism, with its originality and clearness, its depth and simplicity, responded to the wants not only of his own time, but of after generations, has been proved by its having remained in use for centuries, and amid so many different ranks of life and such various degrees of culture. Except his translation of the Bible, this little book of Luther is the most important and practically useful legacy which he has bequeathed to his people.

The visitations were over when the two Catechisms appeared, although they had not yet been held in all the parishes. Events of another kind and dangers threatening elsewhere now demanded the first attention of the Elector and the Reformers.

CHAPTER III.

ERASMUS AND HENRY VIII.—CONTROVERSY WITH ZWINGLI AND HIS FOLLOWERS, UP TO 1528.

Luther's controversy with Erasmus, the most important of the champions of Catholic Churchdom, had terminated, it will be remembered, so far as Luther was concerned, with his treatise 'On the Bondage of the Will.' To the new tract which Erasmus published against him, in two parts, in 1526 and 1527, and which, though insignificant in substance, was violent and insulting enough in tone, Luther made no reply. Erasmus, nevertheless, to the pleasure of himself and his patrons in high places, continued his virulent attacks on the Reformation, which was bringing ruin, he declared, on the noble arts and letters, and carrying anarchy into the Church, while he himself, in his own mediating manner, and in the sense and with the help of the temporal rulers, was doing his best to promote certain reforms in the Church, within the pale of the ancient system, and on its proper hierarchical basis. On what principles, however, that basis was established, and the Divine rights of the hierarchy reposed, he wisely abstained, now as he had done before, from explaining. In Luther's eyes he was merely a refined Epicurean, who had inward doubts about religion and Christianity, and treated both with disdain.

Luther's letter to Henry VIII., which we have noticed in an earlier chapter, took a long time before it reached the King, and before the latter could send an answer to it. The writing of that answer must have given his royal adversary much satisfaction; it turned out a good deal coarser than even the one from Duke George; Luther's marriage in particular afforded Henry an occasion for insulting language. Emser published it in German early in 1527, adding some vituperations and falsehoods of his own. Luther's only object in replying was to dissipate any impression that he had ever declared to Henry his readiness to recant. His reply consisted of a few but powerfully written pages. He pointed out that in his letter he had expressly excepted his doctrines from any offer of retractation; upon these doctrines he took his stand, let kings and the devil do their worst. Beyond these he had nothing which so encouraged his heart, and gave him such strength and joy. To the personal insults and imputations of sensuality and so forth, which Henry VIII., this man of unbridled passions, had poured upon him, he replied that he was well aware that, in regard to his personal life, he was a poor sinner, and that he was glad his enemies were all saints and angels. He added, however, that though he knew himself to be a sinner before God and his dear Christian brethren, he wished at the same time to be virtuous before the world, and that virtuous he was—so much so that his enemies were not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. With regard to his letter to Henry he acknowledged that in this, as in his letter to Duke George, and others, he had been tempted to make a foolish trial of humility. 'I am a fool, and remain a fool, for putting faith so lightly in others.'

Luther reverts in this reply to enemies of a different sort, who make his heart still heavier. These are to him his 'tender children,' his 'little brothers,' his 'golden little friends, the spirits of faction and the fanatics,' who would not have known anything worth knowing either of Christ or of the gospel, if Luther had not previously written about it. He alluded, in particular, to the new 'Sacramentarians,' and to Zwingli their leader.

Although this is the first time that Zwingli makes his appearance in the history of Luther, and was never treated by him otherwise than as a new offshoot of fanaticism, it is important, in order to understand and appreciate him aright, to bear in mind the fact that, himself only a few months younger than Luther, he had been working since 1519 among the community at Zurich as an independent and progressive Evangelical Reformer, and had extended his active influence over Switzerland, however little noticed he had been at Wittenberg.

His career hitherto had been made easier for him than was the case with Luther. The Grand Council of the city of Zurich not only afforded him their protection, but in 1520 decreed full liberty to preach the Gospels and Epistles of the Apostles in the sense he ascribed to them, and in 1523 formally declared their acceptance of his doctrines, and abolished all idolatrous practices. No Recess of a Diet was here to disturb or threaten him. The Pope, for political reasons, behaved with unwonted caution and discretion: he delayed in this case for several years the ban of excommunication which he had pronounced so readily against Luther. Even Hadrian, the man of firm character, to whom Luther was an object of abhorrence, had only gracious and insinuating words for the Zurich Reformer. The Zurich authorities, at the same time, acting in concert with Zwingli, adopted severe measures against any intrusion of fanatics and Anabaptists, nor did the entire population of the small republic contain any great number of persons so thoroughly neglected, and so difficult of influence by preachers, as was the case with the country people in Germany. Well might Zwingli press forward with a lighter heart than Luther's in his work.

Personally, moreover, he had never passed through such severe inward struggles as Luther, nor had ever wrestled with such spiritual anguish and distress. The thought of reconciliation with God, and the comforting of conscience by the assurance of His forgiving mercy, were not with Zwingli, as with Luther, the centre and focus of his aspirations and religious interests. He knew not that fervour and intenseness which made Luther grasp at every means for bringing home God's grace to congregations of believers, or to each

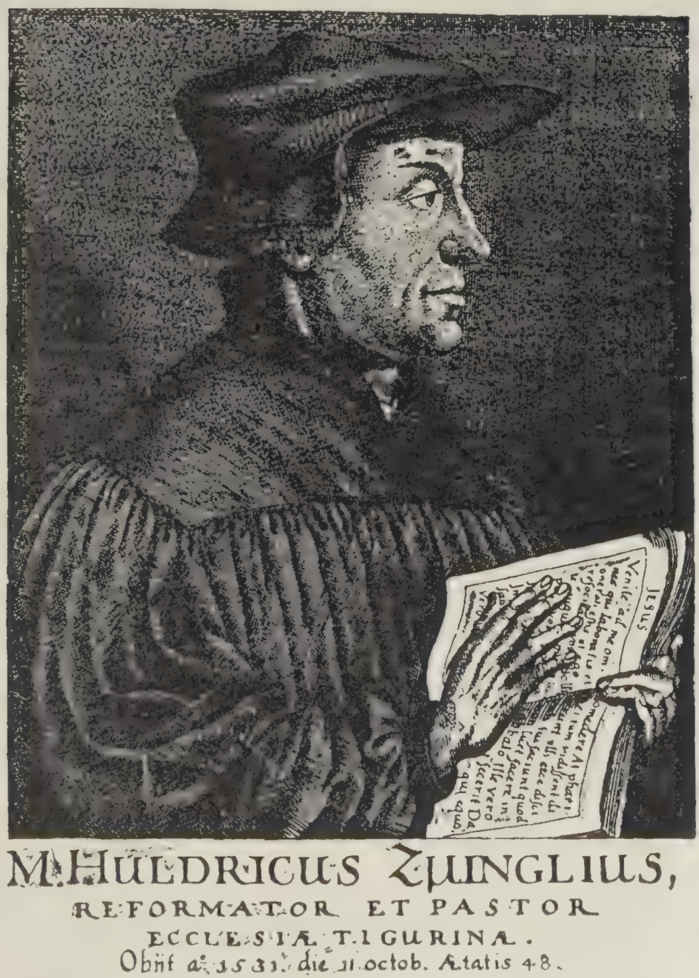

JESUS
Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis
M. HULDRICUS ZUINGLIUS,
REFORMATOR ET PASTOR
ECCLESIÆ TIGURINÆ.
Obiit a. 1531. die 11 octob. Ætatis 48.

Fig. 38.—Zwingli. (From an old engraving.)

individual Christian according to his spiritual need. His view, from the very first, extended rather to the totality of religious truth, as revealed by God in Scripture, but sadly disfigured in the creeds of the Church by man's additions and misinterpretations; and he aimed, far more than Luther, at a reconstruction of moral, and especially of communal life, in conformity with what the Word of God appeared to demand. It was easier for him, therefore, to break with the past: critical scruples against tradition did not weigh so heavily on his conscience. His critical faculties, no doubt, were sharpened by the humanistic culture he had acquired. Compared with Luther's peculiar meditative mood, and his half-choleric, half-melancholic temperament, Zwingli evinced, in all his conduct and demeanour, a more clear and sober intelligence, and a far calmer and more easy disposition. His practical policy and conduct was allied with a tendency to judicial severity, in contrast to the free spirit which animated Luther. So rigorous and narrow-minded was his zeal against the toleration of images, that the Wittenberg theologians could not help detecting in him a spirit akin to that of Carlstadt and the other fanatics.

In renouncing the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and the idea of a sacrifice, Zwingli had rejected altogether the supposition of a Real Presence of Christ's Body at the Sacrament; nay, as he declared later on, he had never truly believed in it. He quoted the words of Christ, 'The flesh profiteth nothing' (St. John vi. 63). He would understand by the Sacrament simply a spiritual feeding of the faithful, who, by the Word of God and His Spirit, are enabled to enjoy in faith the salvation purchased by the death of Christ. He saw no particular necessity for offering this salvation to them by an administration of Christ's Body, which had been given for them, through the visible medium of the bread; nor did he see how by so doing their faith could be strengthened. In Luther's view the practical significance of the Real Presence lay in this, that in this special manner the Christian, who felt his need of salvation, was assured, and became a partaker, of forgiveness and communion with his Saviour. With Zwingli, such a visible communication of the Divine gift of salvation was opposed to his conception of God and the Divine Nature; just as this conception was opposed to that kind of union of the Divine and human nature in Christ Himself, by virtue of which, according to Luther, Christ was able and willing to be actually present everywhere in the Sacrament with His human, transfigured body. Inasmuch, said Zwingli, as this spiritual feeding took place in faith everywhere, and not only at the Sacrament, it was no essential part of the Sacrament; the real essence whereof consisted in this, that the faithful here confessed by that act their common belief in the commemoration of Christ's death, and, as members of His Body, pledged themselves to such belief: he called the Sacrament the symbol of a pledge. Luther himself, as we have seen, had taught from the first that the Sacrament or Communion should represent the union of Christians with the spiritual Body, or their communion of the spirit, of faith, and of love. But with him this communion was a secondary condition; it was the feeding on the Body of Christ Himself which was to promote such communion with one another and, above all, with Christ. Zwingli explained the word 'is' of our Lord, in His institution of the Sacrament, to mean 'signifies.' Oecolampadius preferred the explanation that the bread was not the Body in the proper sense of the word, but a symbol of the Body. In point of fact, this was a distinction without a difference.

Such, briefly stated, was the doctrinal controversy in which the two Reformers, the German and the Swiss, now engaged, and which had first brought them into contact.

About the same time Luther made the acquaintance of another opponent of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the Silesian Kaspar Schwenkfeld. He also, like his friend Valentin Krautwald, denied the Real Presence; but sought to interpret the words of institution in yet another manner, connecting with his theory of their meaning deeper mystical ideas of the means of salvation in general, which at least in some quarters and to a small extent, have still survived.

In all of them, however—in Carlstadt, Zwingli, Schwenkfeld, and the rest—Luther, as he wrote to his friends at Reutlingen, perceived only one and the same puffed up, carnal mind, twisting about and struggling, to avoid having to remain subject to the Word of God.

His first public declaration against Zwingli's new doctrine was in 1526, in his preface to the Syngramma or treatise of the fourteen Swabian ministers, written, as his opening words express it, 'against the new fanatics, who put forth novel dreams about the Sacrament, and confuse the world.'

Blow upon blow followed in the battle thus commenced. While Oecolampadius was busy composing a reply to the treatise and its preface, by which he in particular had been assailed, Luther proceeded to follow up the attack. The same year he published a 'Sermon on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, against the Fanatics;' and in the following spring a larger work with the title 'A Proof that Christ's Words of Institution, "This is My Body," &c., still stand, against the Fanatics.' He concludes the latter with the wish, 'God grant that they may be converted to the truth; if not, that they may twist cords of vanity wherewith to catch themselves, and fall into my hands.' Just then, however, Zwingli had written against him, and to him, and the missive arrived at the moment when he had issued the last-named work. Zwingli wrote in Latin, entitling his tract, 'A Friendly Exposition of the matter concerning the Sacrament,' and sent it with a letter to Luther. These were followed almost immediately by a reply, in German, to Luther's Sermon, under the title of 'A Friendly Criticism of the Sermon of the Excellent Martin Luther against the Fanatics.' Zwingli had scarcely had Luther's last written work in his hands when he replied to it in a new treatise: 'A proof that Christ's words, "This is My Body which is given for you," will for all ages retain the ancient and only meaning, and that Martin Luther in his last book has neither taught nor proved his own and the Pope's meaning;' the title thus indicating that Luther's and the Pope's meaning were one and the same. Oecolampadius at the same time published 'A fair Reply' to Luther's work. These were the writings of the Sacramentarians which reached Luther during the troublous time of the plague at Wittenberg, and filled him with the pain of which we heard him then complain.

Zwingli's doctrine, from the time of its first announcement, had seemed to Luther nothing but a visionary—nay, 'devilish' perversion of the truth and the Word of God. The progress of the controversy, so far from healing the difference between them, tended only to sharpen and intensify it. From the first hour the two Reformers met in opposition, the gulf was already fixed which henceforth divided Evangelical Protestantism into two separate Confessions and Church communities.

This is not the place to pass judgment on the matter in controversy, or to trace minutely the leading points of dogma involved in the dispute. Regarding it, however, by the light of history, it must be acknowledged and avowed that this was no mere passionate quarrel about words alone or propositions of dogmatic and metaphysical interest, but devoid of any religious importance. Even in the attempts to establish points of detail, reference was constantly made, on both sides, to deep questions and views of Christian religion.

Not only did Zwingli and Oecolampadius, in their anti-literal and figurative interpretation of the words of institution, endeavour to support it by Scriptural analogies, more or less appropriate, but in the practical objections they raised, which Luther treated as over-curious subtleties of human reason, they were actuated in reality by motives of a religious character. In their view, a pure and reverential conception of God was inconsistent with the idea of such an offertory of Divine gifts, consisting of material elements and for mere bodily nourishment. Not indeed that Luther, in accepting the words in their literal sense, had become a slave to the letter, in contradiction to the free and lofty spirit in which he had elsewhere accepted the contents of Holy Scripture. The question with him here was about a word of unique importance—a word used by Christ on the threshold, so to speak, of His death for our redemption; and we have already remarked what value he attached to the actual bodily presence indicated by that word, as assuring and imparting salvation to those who partook at His table in faith. No analogies to the contrary, derived from other figurative expressions, would content him, though of course he never denied that such expressions could and did occur throughout the Bible. The text, 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' on which Zwingli primarily relied, Luther understood as referring not to the flesh of Christ, but to the carnal mind of man ; though he was careful to declare that it was not the fleshly presence, as such, of our Saviour which gave the Sacrament its value and importance ; nor must the feeding of the communicants be a mere bodily feeding, but that the word and promise of Christ were there present, and that faith alone in that word and promise could make the feeding bring salvation. God's glory was therein exalted to the highest, that from His pitying love he made Himself equal with the lowest.

In the doctrine concerning the person of the Redeemer, a point to which the controversy further led, the Church had hitherto affirmed simply a union of the Divine and human natures, each retaining the attributes and qualities peculiar to itself. Luther wished to see in the Man Jesus, the Divine nature, which stooped to share humanity, conceived and realised with deeper and more active fervour. As the Son of God He died for us, and as the Son of Man. He was exalted, with His body, to sit at the right hand of God, which is not limited to any place, and is at once nowhere and everywhere. It is true, Luther does not proceed to explain how this body is still a human body, or indeed a body at all. Zwingli, in keeping the two natures distinct, wished to preserve the sublimity of his God and the genuine humanity of the Redeemer; but in so doing, he ended by making the two natures run parallel, so to speak, in a mere stiff, dogmatic formulary, and by an artificial interpretation and analysis of the words of Scripture touching the One Jesus, the Son of God and man.

The manner, however, in which this controversy was conducted on both sides betrays an utter failure on the part of either combatant to apprehend and do justice to the religious and Christian motives, which, with all their antagonism, never ceased to animate the opposite party. Luther's attitude towards Zwingli we have already noticed. We have seen how his zeal, in particular, prompted him too often to see in the conduct of individual opponents simply and solely the dominating influence of that spirit, from which certain pernicious tendencies, according to his own convictions, proceeded and had to be combated. Thus it was in this instance. It was all visionary nonsense, nay, sheer devilry, and be attacked it in language of proportionate violence. From Zwingli a different attitude was to be expected, from the amicable titles of his treatises and the personal correspondence with Luther which he himself invited. He adopted here for the most part, as in other matters, a calm and courteous tone, and exercised a power of self-restraint to which Luther was a stranger. But with a lofty mien, though in the same tone, he rejected Luther's propositions, as the fruit of ludicrous obstinacy and narrowness of mind, nay, as a retrograde step into Popery. His letter, moreover, embittered the contest by importing into it extraneous matter of reproach, such as, in particular, Luther's conduct in the Peasants' War. Luther had reason to say of him, 'He rages against me, and threatens me with the utmost moderation and modesty.' Zwingli's later replies evince a straightforwardness we miss in the earlier ones, but they are marred by much rudeness and coarseness of language, and display throughout a lofty self-consciousness and a triumphant assurance of victory.

Luther, after reading the last-mentioned treatises of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, resolved to publish one answer more, the last; for Satan, he said, must not be suffered to hinder him further in the prosecution of other and more important matters. At this time he was particularly anxious to complete his translation of the Bible, being now hard at work with the books of the Prophets. His answer to Zwingli grew ultimately into the most exhaustive of all his contributions to the dispute. It appeared in March 1528 under the title of 'Confession concerning the Lord's Supper.' He went over once more all the most important questions and arguments which had formed the subject of contention, expounded his ideas more fully on the Person and Presence of Christ, and explained calmly and impressively the passages of Scripture relating thereto. He concluded with a short summary of his own confession of Christian faith, that men might know, both then and after his death, how carefully and diligently he had thought over everything, and that future teachers of error might not pretend that Luther would have taught many things otherwise at another time and after further reflection.

Zwingli and Oecolampadius hastened at once to prepare new pamphlets in reply, and to publish them with a dedication to the Elector John and the Landgrave Philip. But Luther adhered to his resolve. He let them have the last word, as he had done with Erasmus. They had not contributed anything new to the dispute.

While Luther was writing his last treatise against the Sacramentarians, he found himself obliged to issue a fresh protest against the Anabaptists. This was a tract entitled 'On Anabaptism; to two pastors.' But while denouncing these sectaries, he protested strongly against the manner in which the civil authorities were dealing with them, by the infliction of punishment and even death on account of their principles, even when no seditious conduct could be alleged against them. Everyone, he said, should be allowed to believe what he liked. Similarly he wrote to Nüremberg shortly after, where as we have already mentioned, the new errors were spreading, saying that he could in no wise admit the right to execute false prophets or teachers; it was quite enough to expel them. Luther in this distinguished himself above most of the men of the Reformation. At Zurich, while Zwingli was accusing Luther of cruelty, Anabaptists were being drowned in public.

The foreground is now occupied again by the struggle with Catholicism—in other words, by the contest with the German princes who were hostile to the Reformation, and with the Emperor himself and the majority of the Diet.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH DIVISIONS IN GERMANY—WAR WITH THE TURKS—THE CONFERENCE AT MARBURG, 1529.

In the war against the Pope and France an imperial army in 1527 had stormed and plundered Rome. God, as Luther said, had so ordained, that the Emperor, who persecuted Luther for the Pope, had to destroy the Pope for Luther. But Charles V. was not then in a position to break with the Head of the Church. In the treaty concluded with the Pope in November, mention was again made of extirpating the Lutheran heresy. And whilst in Italy the war with France was still going on, the Emperor in the spring of 1528 sent an ambassador to the German Courts, to rouse fresh zeal for the Church in this matter.

But before the threatened danger actually reached the Evangelical party, it was preceded by disquieting rumours and false alarms.

In March 1528 a new Diet was to assemble at Ratisbon. Luther heard in February of strange designs being meditated there by the Papists. His wish was that Charles's brother Ferdinand might be detained in Hungary, where he was occupied in fighting the Turks and their *protégé*, Prince John Zapolya of Transylvania, and that the Diet should be prevented from meeting. Luther's adversaries, on the other hand, feared an unfavourable decision from the Estates, and the Emperor at length peremptorily forbade their meeting.

Just about this time, John Pack, a steward of the chancery who had been dismissed by Duke George of

Saxony, came to the Landgrave Philip and informed him of a league concluded with King Ferdinand by the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria, the Electors of Mayence and Brandenburg, and several Bishops, to attack the Evangelical princes. The Electorate of Saxony, where John was just then engaged in completing the re-organisation of the Church, was to be partitioned among them, and Hesse was to be allotted to Duke George. John and Philip quickly formed an offensive and defensive alliance, and called out their troops. The whole scheme, as was shortly proved beyond dispute, was an invention, and the pretended treaty a forgery, of Pack, who had been paid a large sum for his revelations. Luther himself had no doubt of the genuineness of the document, and persisted even afterwards in his belief. But while the Landgrave, with his habitual vehemence, was impatient to strike quickly, before their enemies were prepared, both Luther and the other Wittenberg theologians did their utmost to restrain their sovereign from any act of violence. Luther earnestly bade him remember the words: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth' (St. Matt. v. 5),—'As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men' (Rom. xii. 18),—'Those that take the sword, shall perish with the sword' (St. Matt. xxvi. 52). He warned them that 'one durst not paint the devil over one's door, nor ask him to stand godfather.' He feared a civil war among the princes, which would be worse than a rising of the peasants, and utterly ruinous to Germany. Philip accordingly stayed his hand, until the reply of his supposed enemies, from whom he demanded an explanation, puzzled him as to the meaning of Pack's overtures.

A private letter sent by Luther to Link, in which he spoke of George as a fool, and said he mistrusted his promises, led afterwards, on George's learning its contents, to a new and bitter quarrel between the two. The Duke made a violent attack on Luther in a pamphlet, which appeared early in 1521, to which the latter replied with equal violence, denouncing the abuse of 'secret (*i.e.* private) and stolen letters.' George retorted in the same strain, and persuaded his cousin John, to whom he addressed a formal complaint, to prohibit Luther from printing anything more against him without Electoral permission;—a step which effectually silenced his opponent.

On November 30, 1528, the Emperor summoned a Diet to meet at Spires on February 21 of the following year, in order that decisive and energetic measures should be taken —as recommended once more by the Pope—to secure the unity and sole supremacy of the Catholic Church. The chief subjects named for deliberation were, the armament against the Turks, and the innovations in matters of religion.

As regards the war against the Turks, Luther, who had previously let fall some occasional remarks about certain wholesome effects it would have in checking the designs of the Papacy, let his voice be heard, notwithstanding, in summoning the whole nation to do battle against the fearful and horrible enemy, whom they had hitherto suffered so shamefully to oppress them. Since the latter part of the summer of 1528 he had been engaged upon a pamphlet 'On the War against the Turks,' the publication of which was accidentally delayed till March, when he was busy with his Catechism.

In this pamphlet he spoke to his fellow-Germans, with the noblest fire and in the fulness of his strength, as a Christian, a citizen, and a patriot, and with a clearness and decision derived from convictions and principles of his own. He had no wish to preach a new crusade; for the sword had nothing to do with religion, but only with bodily and temporal things. But he exhorted and encouraged the authority, whom God had entrusted with temporal power, to take up the sword against the all-devouring enemy, with sure trust in God and certain confidence in his mission. By the 'authority' he meant the Emperor, in whom he recognised the head of Germany. He it was who must fight against the Turks; under his banner they must march, and upon that banner should be seen the command of God, which said 'Protect the righteous, but punish the wicked.' 'But,' asked Luther, 'how many are there who can read those words on the Emperor's banner, or who seriously believe in them?' He complained that neither Emperor nor princes properly believed that they were Emperor and princes, and therefore thought little about the protection they owed to their subjects. Further on he rebuked the princes for letting matters go on as if they had no concern in them, instead of advising and assisting the Emperor with all the means in their power. He knew well the pride of some of the princes, who would like to see the Emperor a nonentity and themselves the heroes and masters. Rebellion, he said, was punished in the case of the peasants; but if rebellion were punished also among princes and nobles, he fancied there would be very few of them left. He feared that the Turk would bring some such punishment upon them, and he prayed God to avert it. Finally, he bade them remember not to buckle on their armour too loosely, and underrate their enemies, as Germans were too prone to do. He warned them not to tempt God by inadequate preparation, and sacrifice the poor Germans at the shambles, nor as soon as the victory was won to 'sit down again and carouse until the hour of need returned.'

At Spires, however, the whole zeal of the imperial commissaries and of the Catholic Estates was directed, not against the common enemy of Germany and Christendom, but to the internal affairs of the Church. They succeeded in passing a resolution or article, declaring that those States which had held to the Edict of Worms should continue to impose its execution on their subjects; the other States should abstain at least from further innovations. The celebration of the mass was not to be obstructed, nor was anyone to be prevented from hearing it. The subjects of one State were never to be protected by another State against their own. By these means, not only was the Reformation prevented from spreading farther, but it was cut off at a blow in those places where it had already been in full swing. By the decision respecting the mass, room was given for attempts to reinstate it on Evangelical territory; by the other decision respecting the subjects of different States, power was given to the bishops of the German Empire to coerce, if they chose, the local clergy, as their subordinates. Further steps in the exercise of this power could easily be anticipated.

This resolution of the majority was answered on April 19 by the Evangelical party with a formal protest, from which they received the name their descendants still bear—Protestants. They insisted that the Imperial Recess unanimously agreed on at the first Diet of Spires in 1526 could only be altered by the unanimous consent of the States; and they declared 'that, even apart from that, in matters relating to the honour of God and the salvation of our souls, every man must stand alone before God and give account for himself.' In these matters, therefore, they could not submit to the resolution of the majority.

The majority, however, as well as Ferdinand, the Emperor's brother and representative, refused to admit their right of opposition. The minority must prepare to submit to coercion and the exercise of force. Against this the Elector and Landgrave concluded, on April 22, a 'secret agreement' with the cities of Nüremberg, Strasburg, and Ulm. The Landgrave was eager that this alliance should be strengthened by the admission of Zurich and the other Evangelical towns in Switzerland. And a similar proposal was made to him by Zwingli, who, in connection with his ecclesiastical labours, was carrying on a bold and high policy, in striving to effect an alliance with the republic of Venice and the King of France against the Emperor. He certainly far overrated the importance of his town in the great affairs of the world, and placed a strangely naïve confidence in the French monarch.

Luther, on the contrary, set his face as resolutely now as in the affair of Pack, against any appeal to the sword in support of the gospel. He would have his friends rely on God and not on the wit of man; and, with regard to the last Diet, he was quite content that God had not allowed their enemies to rage even more. He was willing even to trust to the Emperor for relief; the Evangelical party, he said, should represent to his Majesty how their sole concern was for the gospel and for the removal of abuses which no one could deny to exist; how, at the same time, they had resisted the iconoclasts and other riotous fanatics, nay, how the suppression of the Anabaptists and the peasants was pre-eminently due to them; and how they had been the first to bring to light and vindicate the rights and majesty of authority. A representation of this kind, he hoped, must surely have an influence on the Emperor. He flatly rejected any alliance with those,– namely, the Swiss,—who 'strive thus against God and the Sacrament;' such an alliance would disgrace the gospel and draw down their sins upon their heads. This opinion, in which the other Wittenberg theologians, and especially Melancthon, concurred, determined that of the Elector.

The Landgrave did his utmost to remove this obstacle to an alliance with the Swiss. He urged a personal conference between the rival theologians on the question of the Sacrament. Luther and Melancthon were strongly opposed to such a step, inasmuch as the course of the controversy hitherto had not revealed a single point which offered any hope of reconciliation or mutual approach. Luther reminded him how, ten years before, the Leipzig disputation served only to make bad worse. Intrigues, moreover, were apprehended from the other side, lest the Lutherans should be held up to odium as the enemies of unity and obstacles to an alliance, and the Landgrave be alienated from them. Melancthon, indeed, had brought with him from Spires, where he had been staying with Philip, a suspicion that the latter inclined to the Zwinglians, and was right in his conjecture at least so far, that their doctrine did not appear to him nearly so questionable as to the Wittenbergers. But the simple fear of consequences made Luther unwilling and unable to refuse the Landgrave's urgent invitation, backed as it was with the concurrence of the Elector. He wrote to him on June 23, declaring his readiness to 'render him this useless service with all diligence,' and only entreated him to consider once more whether it would do more good than harm. The conference was to take place at the Castle of Marburg on Michaelmas day (1529).

Luther's sentiments in the interval are expressed in a letter which he wrote on August 2 to a distant friend, the pastor Brismann at Riga. 'Philip (Melancthon) and myself,' he says, 'after many refusals and much vain resistance, have been at length compelled to give our consent, because of the Landgrave's importunity; but I know not yet whether our going will come to anything. We have no hopes of any good result, but suspect artifice on all sides, that our enemies may be able to boast of having gained the victory. . . . I am pretty well in body, but inwardly weak, suffering like Peter from want of faith; but the prayers of my brethren support me. . . . That youth of Hesse is restless, and boiling over with projects. . . . Thus everywhere we are threatened with more danger from our own people than from our enemies. Satan rests not, in his bloodthirstiness, from the work of murder and bloodshed.'

In the same letter Luther tells of the panic caused by a new pestilence—the Sweating Sickness—which had appeared in Germany and at Wittenberg itself. It was a plague, known already many years before, which used to attack its victims with fever, sweat, thirst, intense pain and exhaustion, and snatch them off with fearful rapidity. Luther knew well the danger of it when once it actually appeared. But he watched without terror the supposed symptoms of its appearance at Wittenberg, and remarked that the sickness there was mainly caused by fright. On the 27th he told another friend how the night before he had awoke bathed in sweat, and tormented with anxious thoughts, so much so, that had he given way to them he might very likely have fallen ill like so many others. He named also several of his acquaintances, whom he had driven out of bed, when they lay there fancying themselves ill, and who were now laughing at their own fancies.

The Emperor, meanwhile, concluded a final treaty with the Pope on June 29, and on August 5 made peace with King Francis. By this treaty of Barcelona he pledged himself to provide a suitable antidote to the poisonous infection of the new opinions. By the peace of Cambray he renewed the promise, given in the treaty of Madrid, of a mutual co-operation of the two monarchs for the extirpation of heresy.

At Marburg the meeting now actually took place between the theological champions of that great religious movement which strove to set up the gospel against the domination of Rome, and was therefore condemned by Rome as heretical. It was now to be decided whether the anti-Romanists could not become united among themselves; whether the two hostile parties in this movement could not, at least in face of the common danger, join to make a powerful united Church. Zwingli's political conduct, and the cheerful and submissive readiness with which he had complied with the Landgrave's proposal, afforded ground for expecting that, while steadfastly adhering to his own doctrine, he would embrace such an alliance, notwithstanding their doctrinal differences. Everything now really depended upon Luther.

Zwingli and Oecolampadius met the Strasburg theologians, Butzer and Hedio, and Jacob Sturm, the leading citizen of that town, on September 29, at Marburg. The next day they were joined by Luther and Melancthon, together with Jonas and Cruciger from Wittenberg and Myconius from Gotha; and afterwards came the preachers Osiander from Nüremberg, Brenz from Schwäbish Hall, and Stephen Agricola from Augsburg. The Landgrave entertained them in a friendly and sumptuous manner at his castle.

On October 1, the day after his arrival, Luther was summoned by the Landgrave to a private conference with Oecolampadius, towards whom he had always felt more confidence, and whom he had greeted in a friendly manner when they met. Melancthon, being of a calmer temperament, was left to confer with Zwingli. As regards the main subject of the controversy, the question of the Sacrament, no practical result was arrived at between the parties. But on certain other points, in which Zwingli had been suspected by the Wittenbergers, and in which he partly differed from them—for instance, concerning the Church doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and the Godhead of Christ, and the doctrine of original sin—he offered explanations to Melancthon, the result of which was that the two came to an agreement.

The general debate began on Sunday, October 2, at six o'clock in the morning The theologians assembled for that purpose in an apartment in the east wing of the castle, before the Landgrave himself, and a number of nobles and guests of the court, including the exiled Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg. Out of deference to the audience, the language used was to be German. Zwingli had wished, instead, that anyone who desired it might be admitted to hear, but that the discussion should be held in Latin, which he could speak with greater fluency. The four theologians last mentioned, who were to conduct the debate, sat together at a table. Luther, however, assumed the lead of his side; Melancthon only put in a few remarks here and there. The Landgrave's chancellor, Feige, opened the proceedings with a formal address.

Luther at the outset requested that his opponents should first express their opinions upon other points of doctrine which seemed to him doubtful; but he waived this request on Oecolampadius's replying that he was not aware that such doubts involved any contradiction to Luther's doctrine, and on Zwingli's appealing to his agreement recently effected with Melancthon. All he himself had to do, said Luther, was to declare publicly, that with regard to those doubts he disagreed entirely with certain expressions contained in their earlier writings. The chief question was then taken in hand.

The arguments and counter-arguments, set forth by the combatants at various times in their writings, were now succinctly but exhaustively recapitulated. But they were neither strengthened further nor enlarged. The disputants were constrained to listen during this debate to the oral utterances of their opponents with more deference than they had done for the most part in their literary controversy, with its hasty and passionate expressions on each side.

Luther from the outset took his stand, as he had done before, on the simple words of institution, 'This is my Body.' He had chalked them down before him on the table. His opponents, he maintained, ought to give to God the honour due to Him, by believing His 'pure and unadorned Word.'

Zwingli and Oecolampadius, on the contrary, relied mainly, as heretofore, on the words of Christ in the sixth chapter of St. John, where He evidently alluded to a spiritual feeding, and declared that 'the flesh profiteth nothing.' Honour must be given to God, he said, by accepting from Him this clear interpretation of His Word. Luther agreed with them, as previously, that Jesus there spoke only of the spiritual partaking by the faithful, but maintained that in the Sacrament He had, in his words of institution, superadded the offer of His Body for the strengthening of faith and that these words were not useless or unmeaning, but of potent efficacy through the Word of God. 'I would eat even crab-apples,' said Luther, 'without asking why, if the Lord put them before me, and said "Take and eat."' He fired up when Zwingli answered that the passage in St. John 'broke Luther's neck,' the expression not being as familiar to him as to the Swiss: the Landgrave himself had to step in as a mediator and quiet them.

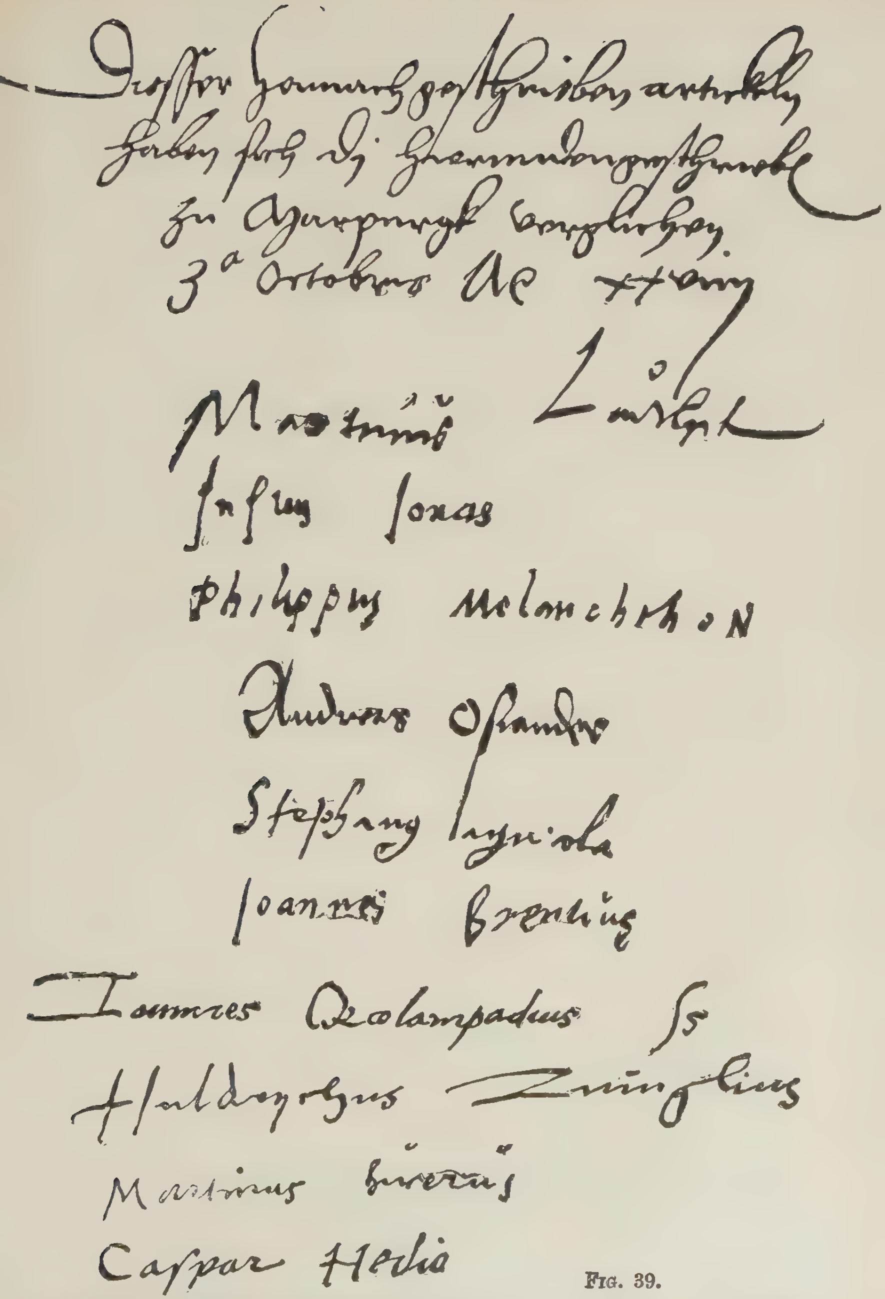
In the afternoon Luther's opponents proceeded to argue that Christ could not be present with His Body at the Sacrament, because His Body was in heaven, and the body, as such, was confined within circumscribed limits, and could only be present in one place at a time. Luther then asked, with reference to the objection that Christ was in heaven and at the right hand of God, why Zwingli insisted on taking those words in such a nakedly literal sense. He declined to enter upon explanations as to the locality of the Body, though he could well have disputed for a long time on that subject: for the omnipotence of God, he said, by virtue whereof that Body was present everywhere at the Sacrament, stood above all mathematics. Of greater weight to him must have been the argument of Zwingli, which at any rate had a Christian and biblical aspect, that Christ with His flesh became like his human brethren, while they again at the last day are to be fashioned like unto his glorified Body, though incapable, nevertheless, of being in different places at the same time. Luther rejected this argument, however, on the ground of the distinction he was careful to draw between the actual attributes which Christ possessed in common with all Christians, and those which He did not so possess at all, or possessed in a manner peculiar to Himself, and exalting him far above mankind. For example, Christ had no wife, as men have.

The next day, Sunday, Luther preached the early morning sermon. He connected his remarks with the Gospel for the day, and dwelt with freshness and power, but without any reference to the controversy then pending, on forgiveness of sin and justification by faith.

The disputation, however, was resumed later on in the morning. The subject of discussion was still the presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament. Luther persisted in refusing to regard that Body as one involving the idea of limits: the Body here was not local or circumscribed by bounds. The Swiss, on the other hand, did not deny the possibility of a miracle, whereby God might permit a body to be in more than one place at the same time; but then they demanded proof that such a miracle was really effected with the Body of Christ. Luther again appealed to the words before him: 'This is My Body.' He said: 'I cannot slur over the words of our Lord. I cannot but acknowledge that the Body of Christ is there.' Here Zwingli quickly interrupted him with the remark that Luther himself restricted Christ's Body to a place, for the adverb 'there' was an adverb of place. Luther, however, refused to have his off-hand expression so interpreted, and again deprecated the mathematical argument. The same day, the second of the debate, Zwingli and Oecolampadius sought to fortify their theory by evidence adduced from Christian antiquity. On some points at least they were able to appeal to Augustine. But Luther put a different construction on the passages they quoted, and refused altogether to accept him as an authority against Scripture. That evening the disputation was concluded by each party protesting that their doctrine remained unrefuted by Scripture, and leaving their opponents to the judgment of God, by whom they might still be converted. Zwingli broke into tears.

Philip in vain endeavoured to bring the contending parties to a closer understanding. Just then the news came that the fearful pestilence, the Sweating Sickness, had broken out in the town. All further proceedings were stopped at once, and everyone hurried away with his guests. The Landgrave only hastily arranged that in regard to the points of Christian belief in which it was doubtful how far the Swiss agreed with the Evangelical faith, a series of propositions should be drawn up by Luther, and signed by the theologians on both sides. This was done on the Monday. They are the fifteen 'Articles of Marburg.' They expressed unity in all other doctrines, and in the Sacrament also, in so far as they declared that the Sacrament of the Altar is a Sacrament of the true Body and Blood of Christ, and that the 'spiritual eating' of that Body is the primary condition required. The only point left in dispute was 'whether the true Body and Blood of Christ are present bodily in the bread and wine.'

If we compare the manner in which this disputation at Marburg was conducted with the previous character of the contest, in which the one party had denounced their opponents as diabolical fanatics, and the other as reactionary Papists and worshippers of 'a god made of bread,' it will be evident that some results of importance at least had been attained by the discussion itself and the mode in which it had been held. The tone here, from first to last, was more courteous, nay, even friendly in comparison. And the moderation now used by these frank, outspoken men, so passionately excited hitherto, could not have resulted solely from self-imposed restraint. Luther, when he wished to speak very emphatically, addressed his opponents as 'my dearest sirs.' Brenz, who was an eye-witness, tells us one might have thought Luther and Zwingli were brothers. And, in fact, on all the main doctrines but that one they agreed. Finer distinctions of theory, which might have furnished food for argument, were mutually waived. But the essential divergence between them on the one great point of the Sacrament, and the spirit manifested in regard to it, made it impossible for Luther to hold out to Zwingli the right hand of fellowship, which the latter and his party so earnestly desired. Luther held to



Diesser hernachgeschriben artickel
haben sich di hernachgeschriebne
zu Marpurgk underschriben
3ª Octobris Aº xxix

Martinus Luther

Justus Jonas

Philippus Melanchthon

Andreas Osiander

Stephanus Agricola

Joannes Brentius

Ioannes Oecolampadius ss

Huldrychus Zuinglius

Martinus Bucerus

Caspar Hedio

FIG. 39.

FACSIMILE OF THE SUPERSCRIPTION AND SIGNATURES TO THE MARBURG ARTICLES.

his opinion: 'Yours is a different spirit from ours.' His companions unanimously agreed with him that though they might entertain sentiments of friendship and Christian love towards them, they dared not acknowledge them as brethren in Christ. In the 'Articles' the only mention made of this matter was that although they had not yet agreed on that point, still 'each party should treat the other with Christian charity, so far as each one's conscience would permit.'

On Tuesday afternoon Luther left Marburg, and set out on his journey homeward. At the wish of the Elector he travelled by way of Schleiz, where John was then consulting with the Margrave George of Brandenburg about the Protestant alliance. They desired of Luther a short and comprehensive confession of evangelical faith, as members of which they wished to enrol themselves. Luther immediately compiled one accordingly, upon the basis of the Marburg Articles, making some additions and strengthening some expressions in accordance with his own views. About October 18 he returned to Wittenberg.

This confession was submitted without delay to a meeting of Protestants at Schwabach. The result was, that Ulm and Strasburg declined to subscribe a compact from which the Swiss were excluded.

Within the league itself, the question was now seriously considered, how far the Protestant States might go, in the event of the Emperor really seeking to coerce them to submission—whether, in a word, they could venture to oppose force to force. Luther's opinion, however, on this point remained unshaken. Whatever civil law and counsellors might say, it was conclusive for them as Christians, in his opinion, that civil authority was ordained by God, and that the Emperor, as the lord paramount of Germany, was the supreme civil authority in the nation. His first consideration was the imperial dignity, as he conceived it, and the relative position and duties of the princes of the Empire.

As subjects of the Emperor, he regarded these princes in the same light as he regarded their own territorial subjects, the burgomasters of the towns and the various other magnates and nobles, to whom they themselves had never conceded any right to oppose, either by protest or force, their own regulations, as territorial sovereigns, in matters affecting the Church. Not, indeed, that he required a simply passive obedience, however badly the authorities and the Emperor might behave; on the contrary, he admitted the possibility of having to depose the Emperor. 'Sin itself,' he said, 'does not destroy authority and obedience; but the punishment of sin destroys them, as, for instance, if the Empire and the Electors were unanimously to dethrone the Emperor, and make him cease to be one. But so long as he remains unpunished and Emperor, no one should refuse him obedience.' Nothing, therefore, in his opinion, short of a common act of the Estates could provide a remedy against an unjust, tyrannical, and law-breaking Emperor, while at present it was apparent that Charles and the majority of the Diet were agreed. Hence he refused to recognise the right of individual States to an appeal to force, for his theory of the German Empire involved the idea of a firm and united community or State, and not in any way that of a league or federation, the independent members of which might take up arms against a breach of their articles of agreement. This theory was shared by his Elector and the Nürembergers. Just as these Protestants for conscience sake had refused obedience to the resolution of the Diet at Spires, so they felt themselves bound by conscience to submit to the consequences of that refusal. Luther's opinion, therefore, as to the proper attitude for the Protestant States was the same as he had expressed to the Elector Frederick on his return from the Wartburg. It was their duty, he said, if God should permit matters to go so far, to allow the Emperor to enter their territory and act against their subjects, without, however, giving their assent or assisting him. But he added: 'It is sheer want of faith not to trust to God to protect us, without any wit or power of man. . . . "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."'

Meanwhile Luther was anxious to respond still further to the call of duty against the Turks. Their multitudinous hosts had advanced as far as Vienna, and had severely harassed that city, which, though defended with heroic valour, was but badly fortified. A general assault was made in force while Luther was on his homeward journey. The news stirred him to his inmost soul. He ascribed to it, and to their god, the devil, the violent temptations and anguish of soul from which he was then suffering again. Immediately after his return, he undertook to write a 'War sermon against the Turks.' On October 26 he received the tidings that they were compelled to retreat. This was a 'heaven-sent miracle' to him. But though his former exhortations and warnings had seemed to many exaggerated, he was right in perceiving that the danger was only averted. He published his sermon, a new edition of which had to be issued with the new year.

He saw in the Turks the fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel and the Revelation of St. John about Gog and Magog, and therewith a judgment of God for the punishment of corrupt Christendom. But just as in his first pamphlet he had called on the authorities, in virtue of their appointment by God, to protect their own people against the enemy, so he now wished further to make all German Christians strong in conscience and full of courage, to take the field under their banner, according to God's command. He set before them the example of the 'beloved St. Maurice and his companions,' and of many other saints, who had served in arms their Emperor as knights or citizens. He would, if danger came in earnest, 'fain have, whoever could, defend themselves,—young and old, husband and wife, man-servant and maid-servant,' just as, according to ancient Roman writers, the German wives and maidens fought together with the men. He looked on no house as so mean that it might not do something to repel the foe. Was it not better to be slain at home, in obedience to God, than to be taken prisoners and dragged away like cattle to be sold? At the same time he exhorted and encouraged those whom this misfortune befell, that, as Jeremiah admonished the Jews in Babylon, they should be patient in prison, and cling firmly to the faith, and neither through their misery nor through the hypocritical worship of the Turks, allow themselves to be seduced into becoming renegades.

Such is what he preached to the people, while he had to complain in his letters to friends that 'the Emperor Charles threatens us even still more dreadfully than does the Turk; so that on both sides we have an Emperor as our enemy, an Eastern and a Western one.' And in those days also he expressed his opinion that those who confessed the gospel should keep their hands 'unsoiled by blood and crime' as regards their Emperor, and, even though his behaviour might be a 'very threat of the devil,' should keep steadfastly to their God, with prayer, supplication, and hope,—to that God Whose manifest help had hitherto been so abundantly vouchsafed to them.

CHAPTER V.

THE DIET OF AUGSBURG AND LUTHER AT COBURG, 1530.

A PROCLAMATION of the Emperor, convoking a new Diet at Augsburg for April 8, 1530, seemed now to indicate a more pacific demeanour. For in assigning to this Diet the task of consulting 'how best to deal with and determine the differences and division in the holy faith and the Christian religion,' it desired, for this object, that 'every man's opinions, thoughts, and notions should be heard in love and charity, and carefully weighed, and that men should thus be brought in common to Christian truth, and be reconciled.' The Emperor by no means meant, as might be inferred from this proclamation, that the two opposing parties should treat and arrange with each other on an equal footing; the rights of the Romish Church remained, as before, unalterably fixed. He only wished to avoid, if possible, the dangers of internal warfare. Even the Papal legate Campeggio, agreed that conciliatory measures might first be tried; the arrangements for the visitation of the Saxon Electorate were already construed at Rome, as indeed by many German Catholics, into a sign that people there were frightened at the so-called freedom of the gospel, and were inclined to return to the old system. But Luther at this moment displayed again the confidence which he always so gladly reposed in his Emperor. He announced on March 14 to Jonas, then absent on the business of the visitation: 'The Emperor Charles writes that he will come in person to Augsburg, to settle everything peaceably.' The Elector John immediately instructed his theologians to draw up for him articles in view of the proceedings at the Diet, embodying a statement of their own opinions. They were also required to hold themselves in readiness to accompany him on his journey to Augsburg. There was, however, no hurry about arriving there; for the Emperor came thither so slowly from Italy, that it was found impossible to meet on the day originally appointed.

On April 3 Luther, Melancthon, and Jonas went to the Elector at Torgau, in order to start with him from there. He took Spalatin also with him, and Agricola as preacher. The 10th, Palm Sunday, they spent at Weimar, where the prince wished to partake of the sacrament. At Coburg, where they arrived on the 15th, they expected to receive further news as to the day fixed for the actual opening of the Diet. Luther preached here on Easter Day, and on the following Monday and Thursday, upon the Easter texts and the grand acts of Redemption.

On Friday, the 22nd, the Elector received an intimation from the Emperor to appear at Augsburg at the end of the month. The next morning he set off at once with his companions. Luther, however, was to remain behind. The man on whom lay the ban of the Empire and Church could not possibly, however favourably inclined the Emperor might be towards him, have appeared before the Emperor, the Estates, and the delegates of the Pope; moreover, no safe-conduct would have availed him. Luther seems, nevertheless, to have been ingenuous enough to think the contrary. At least, he wrote to a friend that the Elector had bidden him remain at Coburg; why, he knew not. To another friend, however, he alleged as a reason, that his going would not have been safe. But his prince was anxious to keep him at any rate as close by as possible, at a safe place on the borders of his territory in the direction of Augsburg, so that he might be able to obtain advice from him in case of need. Moreover, he contemplated the possibility of his being summoned later on to Augsburg. A message from the one place to the other took, at that time, four days as a rule.

Accordingly, on the night of the 22nd, Luther was conveyed to the fortress overlooking the town of Coburg. This was the residence assigned to him.

His first day here passed by unoccupied. A box which he had brought, containing papers and other things, had not yet been delivered to him. He did not even see any governor of the castle. So he looked around him leisurely from the height, which offered a wide and varied prospect, and examined the apartments now opened for his use. The principal part of the castle, the so-called Prince's Building, had been assigned him, and he was given at once the keys of all the rooms it contained. The one which he chose as his sitting-room is still shown. He was told that over thirty people took their meals at the castle.

But his thoughts were still with his distant friends. He wrote that afternoon to Melancthon, Jonas, and Spalatin. 'Dearest Philip,' he begins to Melancthon, 'we have at last reached our Sinai, but we will make a Sion of this Sinai, and here will I build three tabernacles, one to the Psalms, one to the Prophets, and one to Æsop. . . . It is a very attractive place, and just made for study; only your absence grieves me. My whole heart and soul are stirred and incensed against the Turks and Mahomet, when I see this intolerable raging of the devil. Therefore I shall pray and cry to God, nor rest until I know that my cry is heard in heaven. The sad condition of our German Empire distresses you more.' Then, after expressing a wish that the Lord might send his friend refreshing sleep, and free his heart from care, he told him about his residence at the castle, in the 'empire of the birds.' In his letters to Jonas and Spalatin he indulged in humorous descriptions of the cries of the ravens and jackdaws which he had heard since four o'clock in the morning. A whole troop, he said, of sophists and schoolmen were gathered around him. Here he had also his Diet, composed of very proud kings, dukes, and grandees, who busied themselves about the empire and sent out incessantly their mandates through the air. This year, he heard, they had arranged a crusade against the wheat, barley, and other kinds of corn, and these fathers of the Fatherland already hoped for grand victories and heroic deeds. This, said Luther, he wrote in fun, but in serious fun, to chase away if possible the heavy thoughts which crowded on his mind. A few days later he enlarged further on this sportive simile in a letter to his Wittenberg table-companions, *i.e.* the young men of the university who, according to custom, boarded with him. He was delighted to see how valiantly these knights of the Diet strutted about and wiped their bills, and he hoped they might some day or other be spitted on a hedge-stake. He fancied he could hear all the sophists and papists with their lovely voices around him, and he saw what a right useful folk they were, who ate up everything on the earth and 'whiled away the heavy time with chattering.' He was glad, however, to have heard the first nightingale, who did not often venture to come in April.

As companions he had his amanuensis, Veit Dietrich from Nüremberg, and his nephew Cyriac Kaufmann from Mansfeld, a young student. The former, born in 1506, had been at the university of Wittenberg since 1523; he soon became preacher in his native town, where he distinguished himself by his loyalty and courage. They were all hospitably entertained at the castle. Luther, in these comfortable quarters, let his beard grow again, as he had formerly done at the Wartburg.

In that same letter to Melancthon, Luther mentioned several writings which he had in prospect. His chief work was a public 'Admonition to the Clergy assembled at the Diet at Augsburg.' He wished, as he said in the introduction, since he could not personally appear at the Diet, at least to be among them in writing with this his 'dumb and weak message;' which he had expressed, however, in the strongest and most forcible language at his command. As for his own cause, he declared that for it no Diet was necessary. It had been brought thus far by the true Helper and Adviser, and there it would remain. He reminded them once more of the chief scandals and iniquities against which he had been forced to contend; he warned them not to strain the strings too tightly, lest perhaps a new rebellion might arise; and he promised them that if only they would leave the gospel free, they should be left in undisturbed possession of their principalities, their privi-

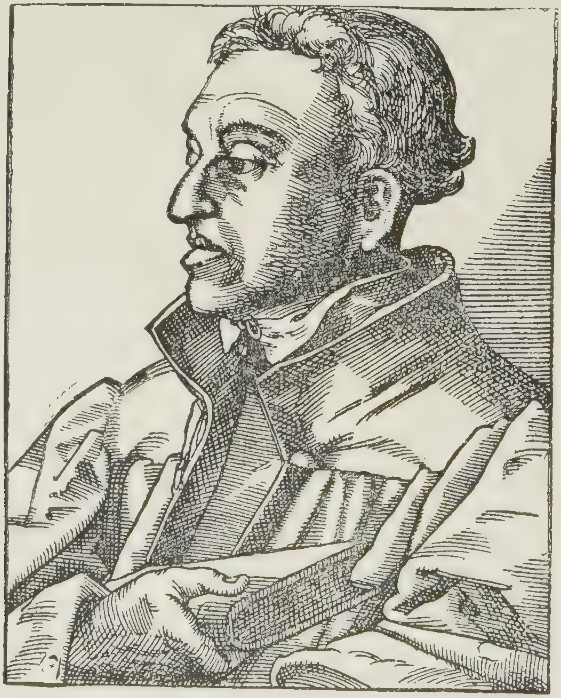


FIG. 40.—VEIT DIETRICH, as Pastor of Nüremberg.
(From an old woodcut.)

leges, and their property, which in fact was all they cared for. This tract was already printed in May.

He now took up in earnest the labours he had spoken of to Melancthon. His chief work was the continuation of his German Bible, namely the translation of the Prophets. He had long complained of the difficulties presented by these Books, and he now hoped to have the leisure they required. Such was his zeal that, when he came to Jeremiah, he looked forward to finishing all the Prophets by Whitsuntide, but he soon saw that this was impossible. He published the prophecy of Ezekiel about Gog and Magog by itself. His wish was to treat of various portions of the Psalms, his own constant book of comfort and prayer, for the benefit of his congregation; and he began, accordingly, with a Commentary on the 118th Psalm. He expounded to Dietrich whilst at Coburg the first twenty-five Psalms; and the transcript of his commentary on these, which Dietrich left behind him, was afterwards printed.

And to these works he wished to add the fables of Æsop. His desire was to 'adapt them for youth and common men, that they should be of some profit to the Germans.' For among them, he said, were to be found, set forth in simple words, the most beautiful lessons and warnings, to show men how to live wisely and peacefully among bad people in the false and wicked world. Truth which none would endure, but which no man could do without, was clothed there in pleasing colours of fiction. For this work, however, Luther had very little time; we possess only thirteen fables of his version. He has rendered them in the simplest popular language, and expressed the morals in many appropriate German proverbs.

Luther thought at first that, with these occupations, he had better have remained at Wittenberg, where, as professor, he would have been of more service.

Soon his bodily sufferings—the singing and noise in the head, and the tendency to faintness,—began again to attack him; so that for several days he could neither read nor write, and for several weeks could not work continuously for any length of time. He did not know whether it was the effect of Coburg hospitality, or whether Satan was at fault. Dietrich thought his illness must be caused by Satan, since Luther had been particularly careful about his diet. He told also of a fiery, serpent-like apparition, which he and Luther had seen one evening in June at the foot of the Castle Hill. The same night Luther fainted away, and the next day was very ill; and this fact confirmed Dietrich in his belief.

On June 5 Luther received the news of the death of his aged father, who breathed his last at Mansfeld, on Sunday, May 29, after long suffering, and in the firm belief in the gospel preached by his son. Luther was deeply moved by this intelligence. He had never ceased to treat him with the same high filial veneration that had formerly prompted him to dedicate to his parent his treatise on Monastic Vows, and to invite him to the celebration of his marriage, made, as we have seen, in accordance with his father's wish. Since his marriage, indeed, his parents had come to visit him at Wittenberg; and the town accounts for 1527 contain an item of expense for a gallon of wine, given as a *vin d'honneur* to old Luther on that occasion. It was then that Cranach painted the portraits of Luther's parents which are now to be seen at the Wartburg. Luther had heard from his brother James in February 1530, that their father was dangerously ill. He sent a letter to him thereupon, on the 15th of that month, by the hands of his nephew Cyriac. He wrote: 'It would be a great joy to me if only you and my mother could come to us here. My Kate and all pray for it with tears. I should hope we would do our best to make you comfortable.' Meanwhile he prayed earnestly to his Heavenly Father to strengthen and enlighten with His Holy Spirit this father whom He had given him on earth. He would leave it in the hands of his dear Lord and Saviour whether they should meet one another again on earth or in heaven; 'for,' said he, 'we doubt not but that we shall shortly see each other again in the presence of Christ, since the departure from this life is a far smaller matter with God, than if I were to come hither from you at Mansfeld, or you were to go to Mansfeld from me at Wittenberg.' After he had opened the letter with the news of his father's death, he said to Dietrich, 'So then, my father too is dead,' and then took his Psalter at once, and went to his room, to give vent to his tears. He expressed his grief and emotion the same day in a letter to Melancthon. Everything, he said, that he was or had, he had received through his Creator from this beloved father.

He kept up his intimacy with his friends at Wittenberg through his letters to his wife, and by a correspondence with his friend Jerome Weller, who had come to live in his house, and who assisted in the education of his son, little Hans. Weller, formerly a jurist, and already thirty years old, was then studying theology at Wittenberg. He suffered from low spirits, and Luther repeatedly sent him from Coburg comfort and good advice. The little Hans had now begun his lessons, and Weller praised him as a painstaking pupil. Luther's well-known letter to him was dated from Coburg, June 19. Written in the midst of the most serious studies and the most important events and reflections, it must on no account be omitted in a survey of Luther's life and character. It runs as follows:—

'Grace and peace in Christ, my dear little son. I am pleased to see that thou learnest thy lessons well, and prayest diligently. Do thus, my little son, and persevere; when I come home I will bring thee a fine "fairing." I know of a pretty garden where merry children run about that wear little golden coats, and gather nice apples and pears, and cherries, and plums under the trees, and sing and dance, and ride on pretty horses with gold bridles and silver saddles. I asked the man of the place, whose the garden was, and whose the children were. He said, "These are the children who pray and learn, and are good." Then

I answered, "Dear sir, I also have a son who is called Hans Luther. May he not also come into this garden, and eat these nice pears and apples, and ride a little horse and play with these children?" The man said, "If he says his prayers, and learns, and is good, he too may come into the garden; and Lippus and Jost may come,[1] and when they all come back, they shall have pipes and drums and lutes and all sorts of stringed instruments, and they shall dance and shoot with little crossbows." Then he showed me a smooth lawn in the garden laid out for dancing, where hung pipes of pure gold, and drums and beautiful silver crossbows. But it was still early, and the children had not dined. So I could not wait for the dance, and said to the man, "Dear sir, I will go straight home and write all this to my dear little son Hans, that he may pray diligently and learn well and be good, and so come into this garden; but he has an aunt, Lene,[2] whom he must bring with him." And the man answered, "So it shall be; go home and write as you say." Therefore, dear little son Hans, learn and pray with a good heart, and tell Lippus and Jost to do the same, and then you will all come to the beautiful garden together. Almighty God guard you. Give my love to aunt Lene, and give her a kiss for me. In the year 1530.—Your loving father, MARTIN LUTHER.'

The intercourse between Coburg and Augsburg was, as may be imagined, well kept up by letters and messengers.

But the crisis of importance arrived when now the great decision approached, or at least seemed to approach, for it was most unexpectedly delayed.

Though the Elector had entered Augsburg on May 2, the Emperor did not arrive there till June 15. He had stopped on the way at Innspruck, where Duke George and other princes hostile to the Reformation hastened to present themselves before him.

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[1] Melancthon's son Philip, and Jonas's son Jodocus.

[2] Hans's great-aunt, Magdalen, mentioned in Part VI. Ch. vii.

In the meanwhile, Melancthon worked with great industry and anxious labour at the Apology and Confession which the Elector of Saxony was to lay before the Diet. Luther warned him, by his own example, against ruining his head by immoderate exertion. He wrote to him on May 12: 'I command you and all your company, that they compel you, under pain of excommunication, to keep your poor body by rule and order, so that you may not kill yourself and imagine that you do so from obedience to God. We serve God also by taking holiday and resting; yes, indeed, in no other way better.' Melancthon had begun this work at Coburg, while there with Luther, and based his most important propositions of dogma on the articles which Luther had drawn up in the previous autumn at Schwabach. His chief efforts, however, in accordance with his own inclination and line of thought, were directed to representing the evangelical doctrines as agreeing with the traditional doctrines of the universal Christian Church; and the Protestant Reformation as simply the abolition of certain practical abuses. Never would Luther have consented to submit to the Diet, and the Papists and enemies of the gospel there present, a Confession which marked so faintly the gulf of difference between himself and them. Nevertheless he gladly approved of this composition of his peace-making friend, which was sent to him for his opinion by the Elector immediately on its completion, on May 11. His verdict was: 'I like it well enough, and see nothing to alter or improve; indeed, I could not do so if I would, for I cannot tread so softly and gently. May Christ, our Lord, help that it may bring forth much fruit, as we hope and pray it will.' He encouraged the Elector, in a letter full of tender words of comfort, to keep his heart firm and patient, even if he had to stay in a tedious place. He pointed out to him God's great token of His love, in granting so freely to him and to his people the word of grace, and especially in allowing the tender youth, the boys and girls who were his subjects, to grow up in his country as in a pleasant Paradise of God.

News now reached them of the Emperor, that he blamed the Elector for the non-execution of the Edict of Worms, and forbade the clergymen whom the Protestant princes had brought to Augsburg, to preach there,—a prohibition against which even Luther admitted they were powerless. On the other side, Melancthon was particularly troubled and annoyed that the Landgrave Philip would not admit a repudiation of Zwingli's doctrine in the Confession, to which Melancthon attached the utmost importance, not only on account of the intrinsic objections to that doctrine, but chiefly in the interests of bringing about a reconciliation with the Catholics. He begged Luther, on May 22, to try and influence Philip by letter on this point.

Luther appears to have shown but little inclination to accede to the request. Melancthon, waiting for his assent, stopped writing to him. Meanwhile Luther's friends at Augsburg were looking with anxiety for the arrival and first appearance of the Emperor. Three whole weeks passed by before Luther again received a letter from them; it was just at this time that he was mourning the death of his father.

Luther was exceedingly indignant at this silence. On receiving another letter, on June 13, from Melancthon, who said he was impatiently waiting for the letter to the Landgrave, Luther sent back the messenger without an answer, and at first was unwilling even to read the letter. He did, however, now, what was asked of him. He earnestly but calmly entreated Philip not to espouse their opponents' doctrine of the Sacrament, or allow himself to be moved by their 'sweet good' words. And when now Melancthon, whom he had seriously frightened by his anger, grew restless and desponding and sleepless with increasing disquietude, through the difficulties at Augsburg, the threats of his embittered Catholic opponents, and the anxiety as to submitting the Confession to the Elector, and the consequences of so doing, and news also reached Luther of the troubles and distress of his other friends, he repeatedly sent to them at Augsburg fresh words of encouragement, comfort, and counsel, which remain to attest, more than anything else, the nobleness of his mind and character. He speaks, as from a height of confident, clear, and proud conviction, to those who are struggling in the whirl and vortex of earthly schemes and counsels. He has gained this height, and maintains it in the implicit faith with which he clings to the invisible God, as if he saw Him; and, raised above the world, he enjoys filial communion with his Heavenly Father.

In answering another anxious letter from Melancthon on the 27th, he reproved his friend for the cares which he allowed to consume him, and which were the result, he said, not of the magnitude of the task before him, but of his own want of faith. 'Let the matter be ever so great,' he said, 'great also is He who has begun and who conducts it; for it is not our work. . . . "Cast thy burthen upon the Lord; the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him." Does He say that to the wind, or does He throw his words before animals? . . . It is your worldly wisdom that torments you, and not theology. As if you, with your useless cares, could accomplish anything. What more can the devil do than strangle us? I conjure you, who in all other matters are so ready to fight, to fight against yourself as your greatest enemy.'

Two days after, he had already another letter from his friend to answer. He saw from it, he said, the labour and trouble, the distress and tears of his friends. He received also the Confession, now completed, and had to give his opinion whether it would be possible to make still more concessions to the Romanists. Upon this point he wrote: 'Day and night I am occupied with it, I turn it over every way in my mind, I meditate and argue, and examine the Scriptures on the subject, and more and more convinced do I become of the truth of our doctrine, and more resolved never, if God will, to allow another letter to be torn from us, be the consequence what it may.' But he objected to the others speaking of 'following his authority;' the cause was theirs as much as his, and he himself would defend it, even if he stood alone. He then referred the anxious Melancthon again to that Faith which had certainly no place in his rhetoric or philosophy. For faith, he said, must recognise the Supernatural and the Invisible, and he who attempts to see and understand it receives only cares and tears for his reward, as Melancthon did now. 'The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness,' 'and make darkness His secret place' (1 Kings viii. 12; Psalm xviii. 11). 'He who wishes, let him do differently; had Moses wished first to "understand" what the end of Pharach's army would be, then Israel would still be in Egypt. May the Lord increase faith in you and all of us; if we have that, what in all the world shall the devil do with us?'

He hastened to send off this letter, and wrote more again on the same subject the next day, June 30, to Jonas, who had informed him of Melancthon's afflictions and of the fierce hatred of their Catholic opponents; also to Spalatin, Agricola, and Brenz, and to the young Duke John Frederick. He sought to calm the latter about the 'poisonous, wicked talons' of his nearest blood-relations, especially the Duke George. He entreated all those theological friends to bring a wholesome influence to bear on their companion Melancthon, and for each of them he had particular words of affection. Melancthon, he wrote, must be dissuaded from wishing to direct the world and thus crucifying himself. The news that 'the princes and nations rage against the Lord's anointed,' he accepted as a good sign; for the Psalmist's words that immediately follow (Ps. ii. 4) were: 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.' He did not understand how men could be troubled since God still lives: 'He who has created me will be father to my son and husband to my wife; He will guide the community and be preacher to the congregation better than I can myself.' His letter to Melancthon shows in an interesting manner the contrast between himself and his friend with regard to cares and temptations. 'In private contests which concern one's own self, I am the weaker, you the stronger combatant; but in public ones, it is just the reverse (if, indeed, any contest can be called private which is waged between me and Satan); for you take but small account of your life, while you tremble for the public cause; whereas I am easy and hopeful about the latter, knowing as I do for certain that it is just and true, and the cause of God Himself, which has no consciousness of sin to make it blanch, as I must about myself. Hence, in the latter case, I am as a careless spectator.' Moreover he felt himself just now less visited by his old spiritual temptations, although the devil still made his body weary.

How Luther used to converse with God as his Father and Friend, Melancthon learned that day from Dietrich. The latter heard him pray aloud: 'I know that Thou art our Father and our God. . . . The danger is Thine as well as ours; the whole cause is Thine, we have put our hands to it because we were obliged to; do Thou protect it.' Luther daily devoted at least three hours to prayer. He liked all his family to do the same. He wrote home to his wife thus: 'Pray with confidence, for all is well arranged, and God will aid us.' Two years later he said in a sermon about the fulfilment of prayer: 'I have tried it, and many people with me, especially when the devil wanted to devour us at the Diet at Augsburg, and everything looked black, and people were so excited that everyone expected things would go to ruin, as some had defiantly threatened, and already knives were drawn and guns were loaded; but God, in answer to our prayers, so helped us, that those bawlers, with their clamour and menaces, were put thoroughly to shame, and a favourable peace and a good year granted to us.'

Just about this time, as Jonas announced to Luther, Duke John Frederick had the arms of the Reformer cut in stone for a signet ring, and Luther was requested, through his friend Spengler of Nüremberg, to explain their meaning. They were peculiarly appropriate to the times. Luther, as long ago, to our knowledge, as the year 1517, instead of his father's arms, which were a crossbow with two roses, had taken as his own one rose, having in its centre a heart with a cross upon it. This, he now explained, should be a black cross on a red heart; for, in order to be saved, it is necessary to believe with our whole heart in our crucified Lord, and the cross, though bringing pain and self-mortification, does not corrupt the nature, but rather keeps the heart alive. The heart should be placed in a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace, and because white is the colour of the spirits and angels, and the joy is not an earthly joy. The rose itself should be set in an azure field, just as this joy is already the beginning of heavenly joy and set in heavenly hope, and outside, round the field, there should be a golden ring, because heavenly happiness was eternal and precious above all possessions.

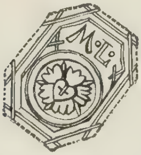

Fig. 41.—Luther's Seal.
(Taken from letters written in 1517.)

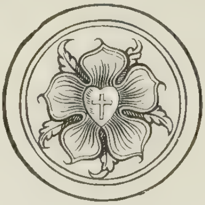

Fig. 42.—Luther's Coat of Arms.
(From old prints.)

Shortly after this, Luther received the great news that the summary of belief of German Protestants, or Augsburg Confession, had been submitted on June 25 to the Emperor and the Estates, in the German language. The Emperor, only the day before, had been anxious that it should not be read aloud, but only received in writing. Publicly, and in clear and solemn tones, the Saxon chancellor read the statement of that evangelical faith, which, only nine years before, at Worms, Luther had been required to retract. Luther was highly rejoiced. He saw fulfilled the words of the Psalmist, 'I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings,' and he felt sure that the remainder of the verse, 'and will not be ashamed' (Ps. cxix. 46), would likewise be accomplished. He wrote to his Elector, saying it was, forsooth, a clever trick of their enemies to seal the lips of the princes' preachers at Augsburg. The consequence was, that the Elector and the other nobles 'now preached freely under the very noses of his Imperial Majesty and the whole Empire, who were obliged to hear them, and could not offer any opposition.' How sorry he felt not to have been present there himself! But he rejoiced to have seen the day when such men stood up in such an assembly, and so bravely bore witness to the truth of Christ.

Tidings also now arrived of a certain clemency and generosity even on the part of the Emperor, and of the peaceful disposition of some of the princes, such as Duke Henry of Brunswick, who invited Melancthon to dinner, and especially of Cardinal Albert, the Archbishop and Elector of Mayence. Luther, unlike Melancthon, was clear and certain on one point, that an agreement with their opponents on the questions of belief and religion was absolutely out of the question. But he now spoke out his opinion most decidedly as to a 'political agreement,' in spite of their differences of belief,—an agreement, in other words, that the two Confessions and Churches should peacefully exist together in the German Empire. This he wished, and almost hoped, might come to pass. In the Emperor Charles he recognised—he, the loyal-minded German—a good heart and noble blood, worthy of all honour and esteem. He did not dare to hope that the Emperor, surrounded as he was by evil advisers, should actually favour the Evangelical cause, but he believed at any rate so far in his clemency. In that spirit he once more by letter approached the Archbishop. Since there was no hope, he wrote, of their becoming one in doctrine, he begged him at least to use his influence that peace might be granted to the Evangelicals. For no one could be, or dared be, forced to accept a belief, and the new doctrine did no harm, but taught peace and preserved peace. He endeavoured further to appeal to the Archbishop's conscience as a German. 'We Germans do not give up believing in the Pope and his Italians until they bring us, not into a bath of sweat, but a bath of blood. If German princes fell upon one another, that would make the Pope, the little fruit of Florence, happy; he would laugh in his sleeve and say: "There, you German beasts, you would not have me as Pope, so have that." . . . I cannot hold my hands; I must strive to help poor Germany, miserable, forsaken, despised, betrayed, and sold—to whom indeed I wish no harm, but everything that is good, as my duty to my dear Fatherland commands me.'

Luther then would not only not hear of surrender, but looked upon as useless any further negotiations in matters of belief. He could not understand why his friends were detained any longer at Augsburg, where they had nothing to expect but menace and bravado on the part of their opponents. On July 15 he wrote to them: 'You have rendered unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. . . . May Christ confess us, as you have confessed Him. . . . Thus I absolve you from this assembly in the Name of the Lord. Now go home again—go home!'

But they had still to wait for a Refutation, which the Emperor caused to be drawn up by some strict Catholic theologians, among whom were Eck, the old and ever violent and active enemy of Luther, and John Cochlæus, originally a champion of Humanism, but who had, since the beginning of the great contest in the Church, distinguished himself by petty but bitter polemics against Luther, and now assisted

Duke George in the place of the deceased Emser. Meanwhile the spiritual and temporal lords caused the Protestants to fear the worst. For Melancthon, these were his worst and weakest hours. He even sought to pacify the Papal legate, by representing that there was no dogma in which they differed from the Roman Church. He thought it possible that even large concessions might be made, so far at least as regarded the rites and services of the Church. For these were external things, and the bishops belonged to the authorities whom God had placed over the externals of life.

Luther therefore had still to wait with patience. He continued his encouraging letters, nor did even menaces disturb him. He remembered that too sharp an edge gets only full of notches, and that, as he had already been told by Staupitz, God first shuts the eyes of those He wishes to plague. To begin a war now would be dangerous even to their enemies; the beginning would lead to no progress, the war to no victory. To Melancthon he spoke, using a coarse German proverb, about a man who 'died of threatening.'

He drew his richest and most powerful utterances from his one highest source, the Scriptures. In his own peculiar manner he expressed himself once to Brück, the chancellor of the Saxon Elector, his temporal adviser at Augsburg, and a man who did much to further the Reformation. 'I have lately,' he wrote, 'on looking out of the window, seen two wonders: the first, the glorious vault of heaven, with the stars, supported by no pillar and yet firmly fixed; the second, great thick clouds hanging over us, and yet no ground upon which they rested, or vessel in which they were contained; and then, after they had greeted us with a gloomy countenance and passed away, came the luminous rainbow, which like a frail thin roof nevertheless bore the great weight of water.' If anyone amidst the present troubles was not satisfied with the power of faith, Luther would compare him to a man who should seek for pillars to prevent the heavens from falling, and tremble and shake because he could not find them. He was willing, as he wrote in this letter, to rest content, even if the Emperor would not grant the political peace they hoped for; for God's thoughts are far above men's thoughts, and God, and not the Emperor, must have the honour. In a letter to Melancthon he explained calmly and clearly the duty of distinguishing between the bishops as temporal princes or authorities, and the bishops as spiritual shepherds, and how, in this latter capacity, they must never be allowed the right of burdening Christ's flock with arbitrary rites and ordinances.

He now published a series of small tracts, one after the other, in which, with inflexible determination, he again asserted the evangelical principles against Catholic errors. In this spirit he wrote about the Church and Church authority; against purgatory; about the keys of the Church, or how Christ dispenses real forgiveness of sins to His community; against the worship of the saints; about the right celebration of the Sacrament, and so forth. Regardless of the pending questions of dispute, his thoughts reverted likewise to the needy condition of the schools: he wrote a special tract, 'On the duty of keeping Children at school.' His Commentary on the 118th Psalm was now followed by one upon the 117th. He also worked indefatigably at the translation of the Prophets. Thus steadily he persevered in his labours, suffering more or less in his head, always weak and 'capricious.' At the conclusion of his stay at Coburg he told a friend that, on account of the 'buzzing and dizziness' in his head, he had been obliged, with all his regularity of habits, to make a holiday of more than half the summer.

On August 3 the Catholic Refutation was at length submitted to the Diet. It showed indeed, as did the imperial proclamation convoking the Diet, that it was far from the Emperor's intention to have the opinions of both sides fairly heard and judged in a friendly and impartial spirit: on the contrary, he demanded that the Protestants should declare themselves convinced by it, and therefore conquered. The Landgrave Philip replied to this demand by quitting Augsburg on August 6, without the leave and contrary to the command of the Emperor, and hastening home, openly resolved, in case of need, to meet force by force. But the Emperor, though urged by Rome to take violent measures, was not prepared, as indeed Luther had guessed, for such a sudden stroke. He preferred to adopt a more peaceful and mediating course, and to attempt once more to settle the differences by a mixed commission of fourteen, and afterwards by a new and smaller committee, in which Melancthon alone represented the Evangelical theologians.

The Protestants had now to consider seriously the question of a possible submission which Melancthon had hitherto been anxiously pondering with himself. Luther's view of the entire standpoint and interests of the Romish Church was now confirmed by the fact that her representatives attached less importance to the more profound differences of doctrine in regard to the inward means of salvation, than to the restoration of episcopal rights and forms of worship, such as, in particular, the mass and the Sacrament in both kinds, which formed the principal difficulties during the negotiations. On the other hand, no one had taught more clearly than Luther the freedom which belongs to Christians in outward forms of constitution and worship, and which enables them to yield to and serve each other on these very points. But he had none the less earnestly cautioned against making concessions to ecclesiastical tyrants, who might make use of them to enslave and mislead souls. In this respect Melancthon now showed himself entirely resolved. He longed for a restoration of the Catholic episcopacy for the Evangelicals, not only for the sake of peace, but because he despaired of securing otherwise a genuine regulation of the Church in the face of arbitrary princes and undisciplined multitudes. In fact the Protestants on this commission were willing to promise lawful obedience to the bishops, if only the questions of service and doctrine were left to a free Council. As regarded the service of the mass the point at issue was whether the Protestants could not and ought not to accept it with its whole act of priestly sacrifice, if only an explanation were added as to the difference between this sacrifice and the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross. Other Protestants, on the contrary, especially the representatives of Nüremberg, became suspicious and angry at such a way of settling matters, and especially at the behaviour of Melancthon. Spengler at Nüremberg wrote accordingly to Luther. The situation was all the more critical, since the negotiations, according to the wish of the Emperor, were to proceed uninterruptedly, and there was no time to obtain an opinion from Coburg.

Luther now, to whom the Elector submitted the Articles which were to bring about an agreement, sent a very calm, clear answer, entering into all the particulars. He gave a purely practical judgment, though resting upon the highest principles. Thus, with regard to the mass, he says that the Catholic liturgy contained the inadmissible idea that we must pray to God to accept the Body of His Son as a sacrifice; if this were to be explained in a gloss, either the words of the liturgy would have to be falsified by the gloss, or the gloss by the words of the liturgy. It would be wrong and foolish to run into danger unnecessarily about so troublesome a word. He warned Melancthon especially against the power of the bishops. He knew well that obedience to them meant a restriction of the freedom of the gospel; but the bishops would not consider themselves equally bound, and would declare it a breach of faith if everything that they wished were not observed. He then quietly expressed his conviction that the whole attempt at negotiation was a vain delusion. It was wished to make the Pope and Luther agree together, but the Pope was unwilling and Luther begged to be excused. Firmly and calmly he relied on the consciousness, whatever happened, of his own independence and strength. Thus he wrote to Spengler: 'I have commended the matter to God, and I think also I have kept it so well in hand that nobody can find me defenceless on any point so long as Christ and I are united.' To Spalatin he wrote: 'Free is Luther, and free also is the Macedonian (Philip of Hesse). . . . Only be brave and behave like men!' We have taken this from letters rich in similar thoughts, addressed by Luther on August 26 to the Elector John, Melancthon, Spalatin, and Jonas, and from other letters written two days after to the three last-named friends and to Spengler. He likewise wrote for Brenz on the 26th a preface to his Exposition of the Prophet Amos. This preface shows us how Luther himself judged his own words which he sent forth with such power. His own speech, he says, is a wild wood, compared with the clear, pure flow of Brenz's language; it was, to compare small things with great, as if his was the strong spirit of Elijah, the wind tearing up the rocks, and the earthquake and fire, whereas Brenz's was the 'still, small voice.' Yet God needs also rough wedges for rough logs, and together with the fruitful rain He sends the storm of thunder and lightning to purify the air.

If, however, Protestantism was then threatened by danger from mistaken concessions, the danger was soon averted by the demands of its opponents, who went too far even for a Melancthon. The proceedings of the smaller committee had likewise to be closed without any result. On September 8 Luther was able at last to tell his wife that he hoped soon to return home; to his little Hans he promised to bring a 'beautiful large book of sugar,' which his cousin Cyriac, who had travelled with Luther to Augsburg and Nüremberg, had brought for him out of that 'beautiful garden.' On the 14th he received a visit from Duke John Frederick and Count Albert of Mansfeld upon their return from the Diet. The former brought him the signet ring, which, however, was too large even for his thumb; he remarked that lead, not gold, was fitting for him. He only wished he could see his other friends also escaped from Augsburg; and although the Duke was ready to take him away with him, he preferred to remain behind at Coburg, in order, as he wrote to Melancthon, to receive them there and wipe off their perspiration after their hot bath.

At Augsburg negotiations were re-opened with Melancthon and Brück; the Nüremberg deputy even thought it necessary to complain in the strongest terms of an 'underhand unchristian stratagem' against which Melancthon would no longer listen to a word of remonstrance; and Luther, who heard of these complaints through Spengler and Link, expressed indeed his full confidence to his Saxon theologians, and was particularly anxious not to wound Melancthon, but earnestly and pressingly begged him and Jonas, on the 20th of the month, to inform him about the matter, to be on their guard against the crafty attacks of their enemies, and to renounce finally all idea of a compromise. While, however, these letters were on their way past Nüremberg through Spengler's hands, it was already known there that the new attempt, especially that against the constancy of Jonas and Spalatin, had shipwrecked, and Spengler consequently did not forward them to their address. The Evangelical States adhered to their Protest of 1529 and to the Imperial Recess of 1526.

The Emperor made known his displeasure at this result, but found that even those princes who were most zealous against the innovations, were not equally zealous to plunge into at least a doubtful war for the extirpation of heresy, and the aggrandisement, moreover, of the Emperor's authority and power, and accordingly he resolved to put off the decision. On the 22nd he announced a Recess, which gave the Protestants, whose Confession, it was stated, had been publicly heard and refuted, time till the 15th of the following April for consideration whether, in the matter of the articles in dispute, they would return to unity with the Church, Pope, and Empire. The Emperor, meanwhile, engaged to bring about the meeting of a Council within a year, for the removal of real ecclesiastical grievances, but reserved until that period the consideration of what further steps should eventually be taken. The Evangelicals protested that their Confession had never been refuted, and proceeded to lay before the Emperor an apology for it, drawn up by Melancthon. They accepted the time offered for consideration. So far then the promise was given of the political peace which Luther had wished and hoped for. Referring to the other dangers and menaces before them, he said to Spengler: 'We are cleared and have done enough; the blood be upon their own head.'

Yet another attempt at union came to Luther at Coburg from quite a different quarter. Strasburg, and three other South German towns, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau, differing as they did from the Lutherans in the Sacramental controversy, had laid before the Diet a Confession of their own—the so-called Tetrapolitana. They too, like Zwingli, refused to recognise any partaking of the Body of Christ by the mouth and body of the receiver, but at the same time, unlike him, they based their whole view of the Eucharist on the assumption of a real Divine gift and a spiritual enjoyment of the 'real Body' of Christ. On the strength of this view, Butzer, the theological representative of Strasburg, sought to make further overtures to the Wittenbergers. He was not deterred by Melancthon's mistrustful opposition or by Luther's leaving a letter of his unanswered. He now appeared in person at the Castle of Coburg, and on September 25 had a confidential and friendly interview with Luther. The latter still refused to content himself with a mere 'spiritual partaking,' and, though demanding above all things entire frankness, did not himself conceal a constant suspicion. However, he himself began to hope for good results, and assured Butzer he would willingly sacrifice his life three times over, if thereby this division might be put an end to. This fortunate beginning encouraged Butzer to further attempts, which he made afterwards in private.

The day after the reading of the Recess, the Elector John was able at length to leave the Diet and set forward on his journey home. The Emperor took leave of him with these words: 'Uncle, Uncle, I did not look for this from you.' The Elector, with tears in his eyes, went away in silence. After staying a short time at Nüremberg, he paid a visit, with his theologians, to Luther. They left Coburg together on October 5, and travelled by Altenburg, where Luther preached on Sunday, the 9th, to the royal residence at Torgau. After Luther had also preached here on the following Sunday, he returned to his home.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG TO THE RELIGIOUS PEACE OF NÜREMBERG, 1532. DEATH OF THE ELECTOR JOHN.

No sooner had Luther resumed his official duties at Wittenberg, than he again undertook extra and very arduous work. Bugenhagen went in October to Lübeck, as he had previously gone to Brunswick and Hamburg. The most important advance made by the Reformation during those years when its champions had to fight so stoutly at the Diets for their rights, was in the North German cities. Luther, soon after his arrival at Coburg, had received news that Lübeck and Lüneburg had accepted the Reformation. The citizens of Lübeck refused to allow any but Evangelical preachers, and abolished all non-evangelical usages, though an opposition party appealed to the Emperor, and actually induced him to issue a mandate prohibiting the innovations. To organise the new Church, the Lübeckers would have preferred the assistance of Luther himself; but failing him, their delegates begged the Elector John, when at Augsburg, to send them at least Bugenhagen. Under these circumstances Luther agreed that Bugenhagen should be allowed to go, although the Wittenberg congregation and university could hardly spare him. His friend was wanted at Wittenberg, said Luther, all the more because he himself could not be of any use much longer; for what with his failing years and his bad health, so weary was he of life that this accursed world would soon have seen and suffered the last of him.

Nevertheless, he again undertook at once, so far as his health permitted, the official duties of the town pastor, who this time was absent from Wittenberg for a year and a half, until April 1532; Luther, accordingly, not only preached the weekly sermons on Wednesdays and Saturdays, on the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, but attended continuously to the care of souls and the ordinary business of his office. He would reproach himself with the fact that under his administration the poor-box of the church was neglected, and that he was often too tired and too lazy to do anything. The pains in his head, the giddiness, and the affections of his heart now recurred, and grew worse in March and June 1531, while the next year they developed symptoms of the utmost gravity and alarm.

All this time he worked with indefatigable industry to finish his translation of the Prophets; in the autumn of 1531 he told Spalatin that he devoted two hours daily to the task of correction. He brought out a new and revised edition of the Psalms, and published some of them with a practical exposition.

In addition to these literary labours, which ever remained his first delight, Luther's chief task was to advise his Elector upon the salient questions, transactions, and dangers of Church politics, which, with the Recess of the Diet and the period thereby allotted for their consideration, had become matters of real urgency. And, in fact, it was to his valuable and conscientious advice that the Protestants in general throughout the Empire looked for guidance.

On November 19 the Recess of the Diet, passed in defiance of the Protestants, was published at Augsburg. They accepted the time allowed them for consideration, but the Emperor and the Empire insisted on maintaining the old ordinances of the Church, and the Protestants were now required to surrender the ecclesiastical and monastic property in their hands. The latter observed, moreover, that the Recess contained no actual promise of peace on the part of the Emperor, but that the States only were commanded to keep peace. In fact, the Emperor had already promised the Pope on October 4 to employ all his force to suppress the Protestants. He immediately subjected the Supreme Court of the Empire—the so-called Imperial Chamber—to a visitation, and instructed it to enforce strictly the contents of the Recess in ecclesiastical and religious matters. Thus the campaign against the Protestants was to begin with the institution of processes at law, with reference particularly to the question of Church property. Furthermore, to secure the authority and continue the policy of the Emperor during his absence, his brother Ferdinand was to be elected King of the Romans. John of Saxony, the only Protestant among the Electors, opposed the election. He appealed to the fact that the nomination was a direct violation of a decision of imperial law, the Golden Bull, which declared that the proposal for such an election, during the lifetime of the Emperor, must first be unanimously resolved on by the Electors. The Emperor had a Papal brief in his hands which empowered him to exclude John, as a heretic, from electing, but he did not find it prudent to make use of it. The election actually took place on January 5, 1531.

The Protestants now sought for protection in a firm, well-organised union among themselves. They assembled for this purpose at Schmalkald at Christmas 1530.

The more imminent, however, the danger to be encountered, the more necessary it became to determine the question whether it was lawful to resist the Emperor. The jurists who advised in favour of resistance, adduced certain arguments, without, however, stating any very clear or forcible reasons of law. They quoted principles of civil law, to show that a judge, whose sentence is appealed against to a higher court, has no right to execute it by force, and that if he does so, resistance may lawfully be offered him; and they proceeded to apply this analogy to the appeal of the Protestants to a future Council, and the action taken against them, while their appeal was still pending, by the Emperor. They were nearer the mark when they argued that, according to the constitution of the Empire and the imperial laws themselves, the sovereignty of the Emperor was in no sense unlimited or incapable of being resisted; but then the difficulty here was, that the right of individual States to oppose decrees, passed at a regular Diet by the Emperor and the majority of the members present, was not yet proved. There was a general want of clearness and precision connected with the theories then being developed of the relations of the different States and the interpretation of their rights. Upon this matter, then, Luther was called on again, with the other Wittenberg theologians, to give an opinion. The jurists also, especially the chancellor Brück, were associated with them in their deliberations.

On the question about Ferdinand's election as King of Rome, Luther strongly advised his Elector to give way. The danger which, in the event of his refusal, menaced both himself and the whole of Germany appeared to Luther far too serious to justify it. The occasion would be used to deprive him of the Electorship, and perhaps give it to Duke George; and Germany would be rent asunder and plunged into war and misery. This, said Luther, was his advice; adding, however, that as he held such a humble position in the world, he did not understand to give much advice in such important matters, nay, he was 'too much like a child in these worldly affairs.'

But a change had now come in his views about the right of resistance; a change which, though in reality but an advance upon his earlier principles, led to an opposite result. He taught that civil authorities and their ordinances were distinctly of God, and by these ordinances he understood, according to the Apostle's words, the different laws of different States, so far as they had anywhere acquired stability. With regard to Germany, as we have seen, his good monarchical principles did not as yet prevent his holding the opinion that the collective body of the princes of the Empire could dethrone an unworthy Emperor. The determining question with him now was what the law of the Empire or the edict of the Emperor himself would decide, in the event of resistance being offered by individual States of the Empire, which found themselves and their subjects injured in their rights and impeded in the fulfilment of their duties. The answer to this, however, he conceived to be a matter no longer for theologians, but for men versed in the law, and for politicians. Theologians could only tell him that though, indeed, a Christian, simply as a Christian, must willingly suffer wrong, yet the secular authorities, and therefore every German prince having authority, were bound to uphold their office given them by God, and protect their subjects from wrong. As to what were the established ordinances and laws of each individual State, that was a matter for jurists to decide, and for the princes to seek their counsel. Accordingly, the Wittenberg theologians declared as their opinion that if those versed in the law could prove that in certain cases, according to the law of the Empire, the supreme authority could be resisted, and that the present case was one of that description, not even theologians could controvert them from Scripture. In condemning previously all resistance, they said, they 'had not known that the sovereign power itself was subject to the law.' The net result was that the allies really considered themselves justified in offering resistance to the Emperor, and prepared to do so. The responsibility, as Luther warned them, must rest with the princes and politicians, inasmuch as it was their duty to see that they had right on their side. 'That is a question,' he said, 'which we neither know nor assert: I leave them to act.'

Luther gave open vent to his indignation at the Recess of the Diet and the violent attacks of the Catholics in two publications, early in 1531, one entitled 'Gloss on the supposed Edict of the Emperor,' and the other, 'Warning to his beloved Germans.' In the former he reviewed the contents of the Edict and the calumnies it heaped upon the Evangelical doctrines, not intending, as he said, to attack his Imperial Majesty, but only the traitors and villains, be they princes or bishops, who sought to work their own wicked will, and chief of all the arch-rogue, the so-called Vicegerent of God, and his legates. The other treatise contemplates the 'very worst evil' of all that then threatened them, namely, a war resulting from the coercive measures of the Emperor and the resistance of the Protestants. As a spiritual pastor and preacher he wished to counsel not war, but peace, as all the world must testify he had always been the most diligent in doing. But he now openly declared that if, which God forbid, it came to war, he would not have those who defended themselves against the bloodthirsty Papists censured as rebellious, but would have it called an act of necessary defence, and justify it by referring to the law and the lawyers.

These publications occasioned fresh dealings with Duke George, who again complained to the Elector about them, and also about certain letters falsely ascribed to Luther, and then published a reply, under an assumed name, to his first pamphlet. Luther answered this 'libel' with a tract entitled 'Against the Assassin at Dresden,' not intended, as many have supposed, to impute murderous designs to the Duke, but referring to the calumnies and anonymous attacks in his book. The tone employed by Luther in this tract reminds us of his saying that 'a rough wedge is wanted for a rough log.' It brought down upon him a fresh admonition from his prince, in reply to which he simply begged that George might for the future leave him in peace.

The imminence of the common danger favoured the attempts of the South German States to effect an agreement with the German Protestants, and the efforts of Butzer in that direction. Luther himself acknowledged in a letter to Butzer, how very necessary a union with them was, and what a scandal was caused to the gospel by their rupture hitherto, nay, that if only they were united, the Papacy, the Turks, the whole world, and the very gates of hell would never be able to work the gospel harm. Nevertheless, his conscience forbade him to overlook the existing differences of doctrine; nor could he imagine why his former opponents, if they now acknowledged the Real Presence of the Body at the Sacrament, could not plainly admit that presence for the mouth and body of all partakers, whether worthy or unworthy. He deemed it sufficient at present, that each party should desist from writing against the other, and wait until 'perhaps God, if they ceased from strife, should vouchsafe further grace.' The new explanations, however, were enough to make the Schmalkaldic allies abandon their scruples to admitting the South Germans, and they were accordingly received into the league.

Thus then, at the end of March 1531, a mutual defensive alliance for six years of the members of the Schmalkaldic League was concluded between the Elector John, the Landgrave Philip, three Dukes of Brunswick Lüneburg, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, Counts Albert and Gebhard of Mansfeld, the North German towns of Magdeburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, and the South German towns of Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau, and also Ulm, Reutlingen, Bibrach, and Isny. Even Luther no longer raised any objections.

By this alliance the Protestants presented a firm and powerful front among the constituent portions of the German Empire. Their adversaries were not so agreed in their interests. Between the Dukes of Bavaria, and between the Emperor and Ferdinand, political jealousy prevailed to an extent sufficient to induce the former to combine with the heretics against the newly-elected King. Outside Germany, Denmark reached the hand of fellowship to the Schmalkaldic League; for the exiled King of Denmark, Christian II., who had previously turned to the Saxon Elector and been friendly to Luther, now sought, after returning in all humility to the orthodox Church, to regain his lost sovereignty with the help of his brother-in-law, the Emperor. The King of France also was equally ready to make common cause with the Protestant German princes against the growing power of Charles V.

As for Luther, we find no notice on his part of the schemes and negotiations connected with these political events, much less any active participation in them. There was just then a rupture pending between Henry VIII. of England and the Emperor, and the former was preparing to secede from the Church of Rome. Henry was anxious for a divorce from his wife Katharine of Arragon, an aunt of the Emperor, on the ground of her previous marriage with his deceased brother, which, as he alleged, made his own marriage with her illegal; and since the Pope, in spite of long negotiations, refused, out of regard for the Emperor, to accede to his request, Henry had an opinion prepared by a number of European universities and men of learning, on the legality and validity of his marriage, which in fact for the most part declared against it. A secret commissioner of the former 'Protector of the Faith' was then sent to the Wittenbergers, and to Luther, whom he had so grossly insulted. Luther, however, pronounced (Sept. 5, 1531) against the divorce, on the ground that the marriage, though not contrary to the law of God as set forth in Scripture, was prohibited by the human law of the Church. The political side of the question he disregarded altogether. He expressed himself to Spalatin, in a certain tone of sadness, about the Pope's evil disposition towards the Emperor, the intrigues he seemed to be promoting against him in France, and the animosity of Henry VIII. towards him on account of his decision on the marriage; and added, 'Such is the way of this wicked world; may God take our Emperor under His protection!'

With Charles V. and Ferdinand the question of peace or war was, of necessity, largely governed by the menacing attitude of the Turks; in fact it determined their policy in the matter. Luther kept this danger steadily in view; after the publication of the Recess he promised the wrath of God upon those madmen who would enter upon a war while they had the Turks before their very eyes. Ferdinand in vain sought to conclude a treaty of peace with the Sultan, who demanded him to surrender all the fortresses he still possessed in a part of Hungary, and reserved the right of making further conquests. He was even induced, in March 1531, to advise his brother to effect a peaceful arrangement with the Protestants, in order to ensure their assistance in arms. Attempts at reconciliation were accordingly made through the intervention of the Electors of the Palatinate and Mayence. The term allowed by the Diet (April 15) passed by unnoticed. The Emperor also directed the 'suspension of the proceedings, which he had been authorised by the Recess of Augsburg to set on foot in religious matters, till the approaching Diet.'

The negotiations were languidly protracted through the summer, without effecting any definite result. An opinion, drawn up jointly by Luther, Melancthon, and Bugenhagen, advised against an absolute rejection of the proposed restoration of episcopal power; the only thing necessary to insist upon being that the clergy and congregations should be allowed by the bishops the pure preaching of the gospel which had hitherto been refused them.

About this time Luther had the grief of losing his mother. She died on June 30, after receiving from her son a consolatory letter in her last illness. Of his own physical suffering in this month we have already spoken. On the 26th, he wrote to Link that Satan had sent all his messengers to buffet him (2 Cor. xii. 7), so that he could only rarely write or do anything: the devil would probably soon kill him outright. And yet not his will would be done, but the will of Him who had already overthrown Satan and all his kingdom.

Soon afterwards, the desire of the Catholics for coercive measures was stimulated afresh by the news of a defeat which the Reformed cities in Switzerland had sustained at the hands of the five Catholic Cantons, notwithstanding that the balance of force inclined there far more than in Germany to the side of the Evangelicals. The struggle which Luther was perpetually endeavouring to avert from Germany, culminated in Switzerland in a bloody outbreak, mainly at Zwingli's instigation. Zwingli himself fell on October 11 in the battle of Cappel, a victim of the patriotic schemes by which he had laboured to achieve for his country a grand reform of politics, morality, and the Church, but for which he had failed to enlist any intelligent or unanimous co-operation on the part of his companions in faith. Ferdinand triumphed over this first great victory for the Catholic cause. He was now ready to renounce humbly his claim upon Hungary, so that, by making peace with the Sultan, he might leave his own and the Emperor's hands free in Germany. Luther saw in the fate of Zwingli another judgment of God against the spirit of Münzer, and in the whole course of the war a solemn warning for the members of the Schmalkaldic League not to boast of any human alliance, and to do their utmost to preserve peace.

But the events in Switzerland gave no handle against those who had not joined the Zwinglians, nor were even the latter weakened thereby in power and organisation. The South Germans had now to cling all the more firmly to their alliance with the Lutheran princes and cities; the Zwinglian movement suffered shortly afterwards (Dec. 1) a severe loss in the death of Oecolampadius. Finally the Sultan was not satisfied with Ferdinand's repeated offers, but prepared for a new campaign against Austria in the spring of 1532, and towards the end of April he set out for it.

This checked the feverous desire of Germans for war against their fellow-countrymen, and brought to a practical result the negotiations for a treaty which had been conducted early in 1532 at Schweinfurt, and later on at Nüremberg. They amounted to this: that all idea of an agreement on the religious and ecclesiastical questions in dispute was abandoned until the hoped-for Council should take place, and that, as had long been Luther's opinion, they should rest content with a political peace or *modus vivendi*, which should recognise both parties in the position they then occupied. The main dispute was on the further question, how far this recognition should extend;—whether only to the Schmalkaldic allies, the immediate parties to the present agreement, or to such other States of the Empire as might go over to the new doctrine from the old Church—which still remained the established Church of the Emperor and the Empire in general—and, perhaps further, to Protestant subjects of Catholic princes of the Empire. There was also still the question as to the validity of Ferdinand's election as King of Rome. Luther was again and again asked for his opinion on this subject.

He was just then suffering from an unusually severe attack, which incessantly reminded him of his approaching end. In addition, he was deeply concerned about the health of his beloved Elector. Early in the morning of January 22 he was seized again, as his friend Dietrich, who lived with him, informs us, with another violent attack in his head and heart. His friends who had come to him began to speak of the effect his death would have on the Papists, when he exclaimed, 'But I shall not die yet, I am certain. God will never strengthen the Papal abominations by letting me die now that Zwingli and Oecolampadius are just gone. Satan would no doubt like to have it so: he dogs my heels every moment; but not his will will be done, but the Lord's.' The physician thought that apoplexy was imminent, and that if so, Luther could hardly recover. The attack however seems to have quickly passed away, but

Luther's head remained racked with pain. A few weeks later, towards the end of February, he had to visit the Elector at Torgau, who was lying there in great suffering, and had been compelled to have the great toe of his left foot amputated. Luther writes thence about himself to Dietrich, saying that he was thinking about the preface to his translation of the Prophets, but suffered so severely from giddiness and the torments of Satan, that he well-nigh despaired of living and returning to Wittenberg. 'My head,' he says, 'will do no more: so remember that, if I die, your talents and eloquence will be wanted for the preface.' For a whole month, as he remarked at the beginning of April, he was prevented from reading, writing, and lecturing. He informed Spalatin, in a letter of May 20, which Bugenhagen wrote for him, that at present, God willing, he must take a holiday. And on June 13 he told Amsdorf that his head was gradually recovering through the intercessions of his friends, but that he despaired of regaining his natural powers.

Notwithstanding this condition and frame of mind, Luther continued to send cordial, calm, and encouraging words of peace, concerning the negotiations then pending, both to the Elector John and his son John Frederick.

Concerning Ferdinand's election Luther declared to these two princes on February 12, and again afterwards, that it must not be allowed to embarrass or prevent a treaty of peace. If it violated a trifling article of the Golden Bull, that was no sin against the Holy Ghost, and God could show the Protestants, for a mote like this in the eyes of their enemies, whole beams in their own. It must needs be an intolerable burden to the Elector's conscience if war were to arise in consequence,—a war which might 'well end in rending the Empire asunder and letting in the Turks, to the ruin of the Gospel and everything else.'

An opinion, drawn up on May 16 by Luther and Bugenhagen, was equally decided in counselling submission on the question as to the extension of the truce, if peace itself depended upon it. For if the Emperor, he said, was now pleased to grant security to the now existing Protestant States, he did so as a favour and a personal privilege. They could not coerce him into showing the same favour to others. Others must make the venture by the grace of God, and hope to gain security in like manner. Everyone must accept the gospel at his own peril.

Luther began already to hear the reproach that to adopt such a course would be to renounce brotherly love, for Christians should seek the salvation and welfare of others besides themselves. He was reproached again with disowning by his conduct the Protestant ideal of religious freedom and the equal rights of Confessions. Very differently will he be judged by those who realise the legal and constitutional relations then existing in Germany, and the ecclesiastico-political views shared in common by Protestants and Catholics, and who then ask what was to be gained by a course contrary to that which he advised in the way of peace and positive law. That the sovereigns of Catholic States should secure toleration to the Evangelical worship in their own territories was opposed to those general principles by virtue of which the Protestant rulers took proceedings against their Catholic subjects. According to those principles, nothing was left for subjects who resisted the established religion of the country but to claim free and unmolested departure. Luther observed with justice, 'What thou wilt not have done to thee, do not thou to others.' With regard to the further question as to the princes who should hereafter join the Protestants, it certainly sounds naïve to hear Luther speak of a present mere act of favour on the part of the Emperor. But he was strictly right in his idea, that a concession, involving the separation of some of the States of the Empire from the one Church system hitherto established indivisibly throughout the Empire, and their organisation of a separate Church, had no foundation whatever in imperial law as existing before and up to the Reformation, and could in so far be regarded simply as a free concession of the Emperor and Empire to individual members of the general body; who, therefore, had no right to compel the extension of this concession to others, and thereby hazard the peace of the Empire. Something had already been gained by the fact that at least no limitation was expressed. A door was thus left open for extension at a future time; and for those who wished to profit by this fact, the danger, if only peace could be assured, was at any rate diminished. If we may see any merit in the fact that the German nation at that time was spared a bloody war, unbounded in its destructive results, and that a peaceful solution was secured for a number of years, that merit is due in the first place to the great Reformer. He acted throughout like a true patriot and child of his Fatherland, no less than like a true Christian teacher and adviser of conscience.

The negotiations above described involved the further question about a Council, pending which a peaceful agreement was now effected. In the article providing for the convocation of a 'free Christian Council,' the Protestants demanded the addition of the words, 'in which questions should be determined according to the pure Word of God.' On this point, however, Luther was unwilling to prolong the dispute. He remarked with practical wisdom that the addition would be of no service; their opponents would in any case wish to have the credit of having spoken according to the pure Word of God.

In June bad news came again from Nüremberg, tending to the belief that the Papists had thwarted the work of peace. Luther again exclaimed, as he had done after the Diet of Augsburg, 'Well, well! your blood be upon your own heads; we have done enough.'

Towards the end of the month, when the Elector again invited his opinion, he repeated, with even more urgency than before, his warnings to those Protestants also who were 'far too clever and confident, and who, as their language seemed to show, wished to have a peace not open to dispute.' He begged the Elector, in all humility, to 'write in earnest a good, stern letter to our brethren,' that they might see how much the Emperor had graciously conceded to them which could be accepted with a good conscience, and not refuse such a gracious peace for the sake of some paltry, far-fetched point of detail. God would surely heal and provide for such trifling defects.

On July 23 the peace was actually concluded at Nüremberg, and signed by the Emperor on August 2. Both parties were mutually to practise Christian toleration until the Council was held; one of these parties being expressly designated as the Schmalkaldic allies. The value of this treaty for the maintenance of Protestantism in Germany was shown by the indignation displayed by the Papal legates from the first at the Emperor's concessions.

The Elector John was permitted to survive the conclusion of the peace, which he had been foremost among the princes in promoting. Shortly after, on August 15, he was seized with apoplexy when out hunting, and on the following day he breathed his last. Luther and Melancthon, who were summoned to him at Schweinitz, found him unconscious. Luther said his beloved prince, on awakening, would be conscious of everlasting life; just as when he came from hunting on the Lochau heath, he would not know what had happened to him; as said the prophet (Isaiah lvii. 1, 2), 'The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.' Luther preached at his funeral at Wittenberg, as he had done seven years before at his brother's, and Spalatin tells us how he wept like a child.

John had, throughout his reign, laboured conscientiously to follow the Word of God, as taught by Luther, and to encounter all dangers and difficulties by the strength of faith. He has rightly earned the surname of 'the Steadfast.' Luther especially praises his conduct at the Diet of Augsburg in this respect; he frequently said to his councillors on that occasion, 'Tell my men of learning that they are to do what is right, to the praise and glory of God, without regard to me, or to my country and people.' Luther distinguished piety and benevolence as the two most prominent features of his character, as wisdom and understanding had been those of the Elector Frederick's. 'Had the two princes,' he said, 'been one, that man would have been a marvel.'

PART VI.

FROM THE RELIGIOUS PEACE OF NÜREMBERG TO THE DEATH OF LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

LUTHER UNDER JOHN FREDERICK. 1532–34.

Political peace had been the blessing which Luther hoped to see obtained for his countrymen and his Church, during the anxious time of the Augsburg Diet. Such a peace had now been gained by the development of political relations, in which he himself had only so far co-operated as to exhort the Protestant States to practise all the moderation in their power. He saw in this result the dispensation of a higher power, for which he could never be thankful enough to God. For the remainder of his life he was permitted to enjoy this peace, and, so far as he could, to assist in its preservation. In the enjoyment of it he continued to build on the foundations prepared for him under the protecting patronage of Frederick the Wise, and on which the first stone of the new Church edifice had been laid under the Elector John.

A longer time was given him for this work than he had anticipated. We have had occasion frequently to refer not only to his thoughts of approaching death, but also to the severe attacks of illness which actually threatened to prove fatal. Although these attacks did not recur with such dangerous severity in the later years of his life, still a sense of weakness and premature old age invariably remained behind them. Exhaustion, caused by his work and the struggles he had undergone, debarred him from exertion for which he had all the will. He constantly complained of weakness in the head and giddiness, which totally unfitted him for work, especially in the morning. He would break out to his friends with the exclamation, 'I waste my life so uselessly, that I have come to bear a marvellous hatred towards myself. I don't know how it is that the time passes away so quickly, and I do so little. I shall not die of years, but of sheer want of strength.' In begging one of his friends at a distance to visit him once more, he reminds him that, in his present state of health, he must not forget that it might be for the last time. No wonder then if his natural excitability was often morbidly increased. He always looked forward with joy to his leaving this 'wicked world,' but as long as he had to work in it, he exerted all his powers no less for his own immediate task than for the general affairs of the Church, which incessantly demanded his attention.

The mutual trust and friendship subsisting between the Reformer and his sovereign continued unbroken with John's son and successor, John Frederick. This Elector, born in 1503, had, while yet a youth, embraced Luther's teaching with enthusiasm, and leaned upon him as his spiritual father. Luther, on his side, treated him with a confidential, easy intimacy, but never forgot to address him as 'Most illustrious Prince' and 'Most gracious Lord.' When the young man assumed the Electorship, and appeared at Wittenberg a few days after his father's death, he at once invited Luther to preach at the castle and to dine at his table. Luther expressed indeed to friends his fear that the many councillors who surrounded the young Elector might try to exert evil influences upon him, and that he might have to pay dearly for his experience. It might be, he said, that so many dogs barking round him would make him deaf to anyone else. For instance, they might take a grudge against the clergy and cry out, if admonished by them, what can a mere clerk know about it? But his relations with his prince remained undisturbed. He saw with joy how the latter was beginning to gather up the reins which his gentle-minded father had allowed to grow too slack, and he hoped that if God would grant a few years of peace, John Frederick would take in hand real and important reforms in his government, and not merely command them but see them executed.

The Elector's wife, Sybil, a princess of Juliers, shared her husband's friendship for Luther. The Elector had married her in 1526, after taking Luther into his confidence, and being warned by him against needlessly delaying the blessing which God had willed to grant him. On what a footing of cordial intimacy she stood with both Luther and his wife, is shown by a letter she wrote to him in January 1529, while her husband was away on a journey. She says that she will not conceal from him, as her 'good friend and lover of the comforting Word of God,' that she finds the time very tedious now that her most beloved lord and husband is away, and that therefore she would gladly have a word of comfort from Luther, and be a little cheerful with him; but that this is impossible at Weimar, so far off as it is, and so she commends all, and Luther and his dear wife, to the loving God, and will put her trust in Him. She begs him in conclusion: 'You will greet your dear wife very kindly from us, and wish her many thousand good-nights, and if it is God's will, we shall be very glad to be with her some day, and with you also, as well as with her: this you may believe of us at all times.' In the last years of his life Luther had to thank her for similar greetings and inquiries after his own health and that of his family.

In the tenth year of the new Elector's reign Luther was able publicly and confidently to bear witness against the calumnies brought against his government. 'There is now,' he said 'thank God, a chaste and honourable manner of life, truthful lips, and a generous hand stretched out to help the Church, the schools, and the poor; an earnest, constant, faithful heart to honour the Word of God, to punish the bad, to protect the good, and to maintain peace and order. So pure also and praiseworthy is his married life, that it can well serve as a beautiful example for all, princes, nobles, and everyone—a Christian home as peaceful as a convent, which men are so wont to praise. God's Word is now heard daily, and sermons are well attended, and prayer and praise are given to God, to say nothing of how much the Elector himself reads and writes every day.' Only one thing Luther could not and would not justify, namely, that at times the Elector, especially when he had company, drank too much at table. Unhappily the vice of intemperance prevailed then not only at court but throughout Germany. Still John Frederick could stand a big drink better than many others, and, with the exception of this failing, even his enemies must allow him to have been endued with great gifts from God, and all manner of virtues becoming a praiseworthy prince and a chaste husband. Luther's personal relations with the Elector never made him scruple to express to him freely, in his letters, words of censure as well as of praise.

In his academical lectures Luther devoted his chief labours for several terms after 1531 to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. He had already commenced this task before and during the contest about indulgences, his object having been to expound to and impress upon his hearers and readers the great truth of justification by faith, set forth in that Epistle with such conciseness and power. This doctrine he always regarded as a fundamental verity and the groundwork of religion. In all its fulness and clearness, and with all his old freshness, vigour, and intensity of fervour, he now exhaustively discussed this doctrine. His lectures, published, with a preface of his, by the Wittenberg chaplain Rörer in 1535, contain the most complete and classical exposition of his Pauline doctrine of salvation. In the introduction to these lectures he declared that it was no new thing that he was offering to men, for by the grace of God the whole teaching of St. Paul was now made known; but the greatest danger was, lest the devil should again filch away that doctrine of faith and smuggle in once more his own doctrine of human works and dogmas. It could never be sufficiently impressed on man, that if the doctrine of faith perished, all knowledge of the truth would perish with it, but that if it flourished, all good things would also flourish, namely, true religion, and the true worship and glory of God. In his preface he says: 'One article—the only solid rock—rules in my heart, namely, faith in Christ: out of which, through which, and to which all my theological opinions ebb and flow day and night.' To his friends he says of the Epistle to the Galatians: 'That is my Epistle, which I have espoused: it is my Katie von Bora.'

His sermons to his congregation were now much hindered by the state of his health. It was his practice, however, after the spring of 1532, to preach every Sunday at home to his family, his servants, and his friends.

But his greatest theological work, which he intended for the service of all his countrymen, was the continuation and final conclusion of his translation of the Bible. After publishing in 1532 his translation of the Prophets, which had cost him immense pains and industry, the Apocrypha alone remained to be done;—the books which, in bringing out his edition of the Bible, he designated as inferior in value to the Holy Scriptures, but useful and good to read. Well might he sigh at times over the work. In November 1532, being then wholly engrossed with the book of Sirach, he wrote to his friend Amsdorf saying that he hoped to escape from this treadmill in three weeks, but no one can discover any trace of weariness or vexation in the German idiom in which he clothed the proverbs and apophthegms of this book. Notwithstanding the length of time which his task occupied, and his constant interruptions, it has turned out a work of one mould and casting, and shows from the first page to the last how completely the translator was absorbed in his theme, and yet how closely his life and thoughts were interwoven with those of his fellow countrymen, for whom he wrote and whose language he spoke. In 1534 the whole of his German Bible was at length in print, and the next year a new edition was called for. Of the New Testament, with which Luther had commenced the work, as many as sixteen original editions, and more than fifty different reimpressions, had appeared up to 1533.

With regard to the wants of the Church, Luther looked to the energy of the new Elector for a vigorous prosecution of the work of visitation. A reorganisation of the Church had been effected by these means, but many more evils had been exposed than cured, nor had the visitations been yet extended to all the parishes. The Elector John had already called on Luther, together with Jonas and Melancthon, for their opinion as to the propriety of resuming them, and only four days before his death he gave instructions on the subject to his chancellor Brück. John Frederick, in the first year of his rule, did actually put the new visitation into operation, in concert with his Landtag. The main object sought at present was to bring about better discipline among the members of the various congregations, and to put down the sins of drunkenness, unchastity, frivolous swearing, and witchcraft. Luther and even Melancthon were no longer required to give their services as visitors: Luther's place on the commission for Electoral Saxony was filled by Bugenhagen. His own views and prospects in regard to the condition of the people remained gloomy. He complains that the Gospel bore so little fruit against the powers of the flesh and the world; he did not expect any great and general change through measures of ecclesiastical law, but trusted rather to the faithful preaching of the Divine Word, leaving the issue to God. It was particularly the nobles and peasants whom he had to rebuke for open or secret resistance against this Word. He exclaims in a letter to Spalatin, written in 1533: 'O how shamefully ungrateful are our times! Everywhere nobles and peasants are conspiring in our country against the Gospel, and meanwhile enjoy the freedom of it as insolently as they can; God will judge in the matter!' He had to complain besides of indifference and immorality in his immediate neighbourhood, among his Wittenbergers. Thus he addressed, on Midsummer Day 1534, after his sermon, a severe rebuke to drunkards who rioted in taverns during the time of Divine service, and he exhorted the magistrates to do their duty by proceeding against them, so as not to incur the punishment of the Elector or of God.

The territories of Anhalt, immediately adjoining the dominions of the Saxon Elector, now openly joined the Evangelical Confession, of which their prince, Wolfgang of Köthen, had long been a faithful adherent; and Luther contracted in this quarter new and close friendships, like that which subsisted between himself and his own Elector. Anhalt Dessau was under the government of three nephews of Wolfgang, namely, John, Joachim, and George. They had lost their father in early life. One of them had for his guardian the strictly Catholic Elector of Brandenburg, the second, Duke George of Saxony, and the third, the Cardinal Archbishop Albert. George, born in 1507, was made in 1518 canon at Merseburg, and afterwards prebendary of Magdeburg cathedral. The Cardinal had taken peculiar interest in him ever since his boyhood, on account of his excellent abilities, and he did honour to his office by his fidelity, zeal, and purity of life. The new teaching caused him severe internal struggles. His theological studies showed him how rotten were the foundations of the Romish system, but, on the other hand, the new doctrine awakened suspicions on his part lest, with its advocacy of gospel liberty and justification by faith, it might tempt to sedition and immorality. But it finally won his heart, when he learned to know it in its pure form through the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of Melancthon, while the Catholic Refutation drawn up for the Diet of Augsburg excited his disgust. His two brothers, whose devoutness of character their enemies could no more dispute than his own, became converts also to Protestantism. In 1532 they appointed Luther's friend Nicholas Hausmann their court-preacher, and invited Luther and Melancthon to stay with them at Wörlitz. George, in virtue of his office as archdeacon and prebendary of Magdeburg, himself undertook the visitation, and had the candidates for the office of preacher examined at Wittenberg. Luther eulogised the two brothers as 'upright princes, of a princely and Christian disposition,' adding that they had been brought up by worthy and God-fearing parents. He kept up a close and intimate friendship with them, both personally and by letter. A disposition to melancholy on the part of Joachim gave Luther an opportunity of corresponding with him. While cheering him with spiritual consolation, he recommended him to seek for mental refreshment in conversation, singing, music, and cracking jokes. Thus he wrote to him in 1534 as follows: 'A merry heart and good courage, in honour and discipline, are the best medicine for a young man—aye, for all men. I, who have spent my life in sorrow and weariness, now seek for pleasure and take it wherever I can . . . . Pleasure in sin is the devil, but pleasure shared with good people in the fear of God, in discipline and honour, is well-pleasing to God. May your princely Highness be always cheerful and blessed, both inwardly in Christ, and outwardly in His gifts and good things. He wills it so, and for that reason He gives us His good things to make use of, that we may be happy and praise Him for ever.'

During these years, the negotiations concerning the general affairs of the Church, the restoration of harmony in the Christian Church of the West, and the internal union of the Protestants, still proceeded, though languidly and with little spirit.

With the promise, and pending the assembly, of a Council, the Religious Peace had been at length concluded. Before the close of 1532 the Emperor actually succeeded in inducing Pope Clement, at a personal interview with him at Bologna, to announce his intention to convoke a Council forthwith. He urged him to do so by frightening him with the prospect of a German national synod, such as even the orthodox States of the Empire might resolve on, in the event of the Pope obstinately opposing a Council, and in that case, of a possible combination of the entire German nation against the Papal see. He knew, indeed, well enough, that the Holy Father, in making this promise, had no intention whatever of keeping it. The Pope now sent a nuncio to the German princes, to make preparations for giving effect to his promise; the Emperor sent with him an ambassador of his own, as well for his control as his support.

When the nuncio and ambassador reached John Frederick at Weimar, the Elector consulted with Luther, Bugenhagen, Jonas, and Melancthon about the object of their coming, and for that purpose, on June 15, 1533, he came in person to Wittenberg, and had an opinion drawn up in writing. The Papal invitation to the Council stated that, agreeably with the demands of the Germans, it should be a free Christian Council, and also that it should be held in accordance with ancient usage as from the beginning. Luther declared that this was merely a 'muttering in the dark,' half angel-like, half devil-like. For if by the words 'from the beginning' were meant the primitive Christian assemblies, such as those of the Apostles (Acts xv.), then the Council now intended was bound to act according to the Word of God, freely, and without regard to any future Councils; a Council on the other hand, held according to previous usage, as, for example, that of Constance, was a Council contrary to the Word of God, and held in mere human blindness and wantonness. The Pope, in describing the Council proposed by himself as a free one, was making sport of the Emperor, the request of the Evangelicals, and the decrees of the Diet. How could the Pope possibly tolerate a free Christian Council when he must be quite aware how disadvantageous such a Council would be to himself? Luther's advice was briefly summed up in this: to restrict themselves to the bare formalities of speech required, and to wait for further events. 'I think it is best,' he said, 'not to busy ourselves at present with anything more than what is necessary and moderate, and that can give no handle to the Pope or the Emperor to accuse us of intemperate conduct. Whether there be a Council or not, the time will come for action and advice.' And it soon became clear enough, that Clement at any rate would not convene a Council. He now entered into an understanding with King Francis, who was again meditating an attack against the power of Charles V., listened to his proposal that the Council might be abandoned, and in March 1534 announced to the German princes that, agreeably to the King's wish, he had resolved to adjourn its convocation.

How firmly Luther persisted—Council or no Council—in his uncompromising opposition to the Romish system, was now shown by several of his new writings, more especially by his treatise 'On private Masses and the Consecration of Priests.' Concerning private masses, and the sacrifice of Christ's Body supposed to be there offered, he now declared that, where the ordinance of Christ was so utterly perverted, Christ's Body was assuredly not present at all, but simple bread and simple wine was worshipped by the priest in vain idolatry, and offered for others to worship in like manner. He knew how they would 'come rolling up to him with the words, "Church, Church;

custom, custom," just as they had answered him once before in his attack on indulgences; but neither the Church nor custom had been able to preserve indulgences from their fate.' In the Church, even under the Popedom, he recognised a holy place, for in it was baptism, the reading of the Gospel, prayer, the Apostles' Creed, &c. But he repeats now, what he had said in his most pungent writings during the earlier struggles of the Reformation, namely, that devilish abominations had entered into this place, and so penetrated it with their presence, that only the light of the Holy Spirit would enable one to distinguish between the place itself and these abominations. He contrasts the mass-holding priests and their stinking oil of consecration with the universal Christian priesthood and the evangelical office of preacher. To the principle of this priesthood he still firmly adhered, faithless though he saw the large mass of the congregations to the priestly character with which baptism had invested them, and strictly as he had to guide his action, in the appointment and outward constitution of that office, by existing circumstances and historical requirements. Thus he repeats what he had said before, 'We are all born simple priests and pastors in baptism; and out of such born priests, certain are chosen or called to certain offices, and it is their duty to perform the various functions of those offices for us all.' This universal priesthood he would assert and utilise in the celebration of Divine service and in the true Christian mass; and he appeals for that purpose to the true worship of God by an Evangelical congregation. 'There,' he says, 'our priest or minister stands before the altar, having been duly and publicly called to his priestly office; he repeats publicly and distinctly Christ's words of institution; he takes the Bread and Wine, and distributes it according to Christ's words; and we all kneel beside and around him, men and women, young and old, master and servant, mistress and maid, all holy priests together, sanctified by the Blood of Christ.

And in such our priestly dignity are we there, and (as pictured in Revelations iv.) we have our crowns of gold on our heads, harps in our hands, and golden censers; and we do not let our priest proclaim for himself the ordinance of Christ, but he is the mouthpiece of us all, and we all say it with him from our hearts, and with sincere faith in the Lamb of God, Who feeds us with His Body and Blood.'

In 1533 Erasmus published a work wherein he endeavoured to effect in his own way the restoration of unity in the Church, by exhorting men to abolish practical abuses and show submission in doctrinal disputes, professing for his own part unvarying subjection to the Church. In opposition to him, Luther hit the right point in a preface he wrote to the reply of the Marburg theologian Corvinus. Erasmus, he said, only strengthened the Papists, who cared nothing about a safe truth for their consciences, but only kept on crying out 'Church, Church, Church.' For he too kept on simply repeating that he wished to follow the Church, whilst leaving everything doubtful and undetermined until the Church had settled it. 'What,' asks Luther, 'is to be done with those good souls, who, bound in conscience by the word of Divine truth, cannot believe doctrines evidently contrary to Scripture? Shall we tell them that the Pope must be obeyed so that peace and unity may be preserved?' When, therefore, Erasmus sought to obtain unity of faith by mutual concession and compromise, Luther answered by declaring such unity to be impossible, for the simple reason that the Catholics, by their very boasting of the authority of the Church, absolutely refused on their part to make any concession at all. But so far as 'unity of charity' was concerned, he held that on that point the Evangelicals needed no admonishment, for they were ready to do and suffer all things, provided nothing was imposed upon them contrary to the faith. They had never thirsted for the blood of their enemies, though the latter would gladly persecute them with fire and sword. As for Erasmus himself, Luther, as already stated, simply regarded him as a sceptic, who with his attitude of subjection to the Church, sought only for peace and safety for himself and his studies and intellectual enjoyments. Acting on this view, Luther, in a letter to Amsdorf, written in 1534, and intended for publication, heaped reproaches on Erasmus which undoubtedly he uttered in honest zeal, but in which his zeal did not allow him to form an impartial estimate of his opponent or his writings. He saw the bad spirit of Erasmus reflected in other men, who, like him, had seen the true character of the Romish Church, but, like him also, rejoined her communion. Instances of this were found in his old friend Crotus, who had now entered the service of Cardinal Albert, and as his 'plate-licker,' as Luther called him, abused the Reformation; and in the theologian George Witzel, a pupil of Erasmus and student at Wittenberg, who formerly had been suspected even of sympathising with the peasants in their rebellion, and of rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, but who now wished for a Reformation after Erasmus' ideas, and was one of the foremost literary opponents of the Lutheran Reformation. Luther, however, deemed it superfluous, after all that he had said against the master, to turn also against his subordinates, and the mere mouthpieces of his teaching.

In addition to Luther's polemics against Catholicism in general, must be mentioned a fresh quarrel with Duke George. The latter, in 1532, had expelled from Saxony some evangelically disposed inhabitants of Leipzig and Oschatz, decreed that everyone should appear once a year at church for confession, and ordered some seventy or eighty families of Leipzig, who had refused to do so, to quit his dominions. Luther sent letters, which were afterwards published, of comfort to the exiled, and of exhortation and advice to those who were threatened. Duke George thereupon complained to the Elector that Luther was exciting his subjects to sedition. Luther, in reply, spoke out again with double vehemence in a public vindication, whilst George made Cochlæus write against him. Further quarrelling was ended by the two princes agreeing, in November 1533, to settle certain matters in dispute, and their theologians also were commanded to keep at peace. With regard to the future, however, Luther had spoken words of significance and weight to his persecuted brethren at Leipzig, when he reminded them what great and unexpected things God had done since the Diet of Worms, and how many bloodthirsty persecutors He had since then snatched away. 'Let us wait a little while,' he said, 'and see what God will bring to pass. Who knows what God will do after the Diet of Augsburg, even before ten years have gone by?'

Firmly, however, as Luther refused to listen to any surrender in matters of faith, or to any subjection to a Catholic Council of the old sort, he desired no less to adhere loyally to the 'political concord.' His whole heart and sympathies, as a fellow-Christian and a good German, went out with the German troops in their march against the Turks, who he hoped might be well routed by the Emperor. He never reflected how perilous the consequences of a decisive victory by Charles V. over his foreign enemies would be for the Protestants of Germany, and how divided, therefore, these must feel, at least in their hopes and wishes, during the progress of the war. He only saw in him again the 'dear good Emperor.' He wished him like success against his evil-minded French enemy. The Pope especially he reproached for his persistent ill-will to the Emperor. The Popes, he said, had always been hostile to the Emperors, and had betrayed the best of them and wantonly thwarted their desires.

Early in 1534 Philip of Hesse set in earnest about his scheme, so momentous for Protestantism, of forcibly expelling King Ferdinand from Würtemberg, and restoring it to the exiled Duke Ulrich. The latter, whom the Swabian League in 1519, upon a decision of the Emperor and Empire, had deprived of his territory, and transferred it to the House of Austria, was staying with the Landgrave in 1529, with whom he attended the conference at Marburg, and shared his views on Church matters. Since then the Swabian League was dissolved, and Philip seized this favourable opportunity to interfere on behalf of his friend. The King of France promised his aid, and in Germany, especially among the Catholic Bavarians, a strong desire prevailed to weaken the power of Austria. Luther's public judgment being of such weight, and his counsels so influential with the Elector Frederick, Philip informed him, through pastor Ottinger of Cassel, of his preparations for war, lest he might otherwise be wrongly given to understand that he was meditating a step against the Emperor. His intention, he declared, was merely to 'restore and reinstate Duke Ulrich to his rights in all fairness,' in the sight of God and of his Imperial Majesty. He 'belonged to no faction or sect:'—this, wrote Ottinger, he was 'instructed by his princely Highness not to conceal from Luther.' The latter, however, at a conference with his Elector and the Landgrave at Weimar, protested against a breach of the public peace, as tending to bring disgrace upon the gospel; and the Elector, in consequence, kept aloof from the enterprise. Philip, however, persisted, and carried it through with rapidity and success. Ferdinand, being helpless in the absence of the Emperor, consented, in the treaty of Cadan, to the restoration of Ulrich, who immediately set about a reformation of the Church in Würtemberg. Luther recognised in this result the evident hand of God, in that, contrary to all expectation, nothing was destroyed and peace was happily restored. God would bring the work to an end.

Meanwhile the Schmalkaldic allies clung tenaciously to their league, and were intent on still further strengthening their position and preparing themselves for all emergencies. No scruples as to whether, if the Emperor should break the peace, they could venture to turn their arms against him, any longer disturbed them. The terms extorted from King Ferdinand by the Landgrave's victorious campaign, were also in their favour. Ferdinand, in the treaty of Cadan, promised to secure them against the suits which the Imperial Chamber, notwithstanding the Religious Peace, still continued to institute against them, in return for which John Frederick and his allies consented to recognise his election as King of the Romans.

And in the interests and for the objects represented by the league, namely, to oppose a sufficiently strong and compact power to Roman Catholicism and its menaces, those further attempts were now made to promote internal union among the Protestants, to which Butzer had so unremittingly devoted his labours, and which the Landgrave Philip among the princes considered of the utmost value.

Luther, although he admitted having formed a more favourable opinion of Zwingli as a man, since their personal interview at Marburg, in no way altered his opinion of Zwinglianism or of the general tendency of his doctrines. Thus in a letter of warning sent by him in December 1532 to the burgomaster and town-council of Münster, he classed Zwingli with Münzer and other heads of the Anabaptists, as a band of fanatics whom God had judged, and pointed out that whoever once followed Zwingli, Münzer, or the Anabaptists, would very easily be seduced into rebellion and attacks on civil government. At the beginning of the next year he published a 'Letter to those at Frankfort-on-the-Main,' in order to counteract the Zwinglian doctrines and agitations there prevailing. He also warned the people of Augsburg against their preachers, inasmuch as they pretended to accept the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament, but in reality did nothing of the kind. He abstained from entering into any further controversy against the substance of doctrines opposed to his own. He was concerned not so much about the victory of his own doctrine, which he left with confidence in God's hands, but lest, under the guise of agreement with him, error should creep in and deceit be practised in a matter so sacred and important. He always felt suspicious of Butzer on this point.

He now saw the evil and terrible fruits of that spirit which had possessed Münzer and the Anabaptists,—such fruits as he had always expected from it. In Münster, where his warning had passed unregarded, the Anabaptists had been masters since February 1534. As the pretended possessors of Christianity in its intellectual and spiritual purity, they established there a kingdom of the saints, with a mad, sensual fanaticism, a coarse worship of the flesh, and a wild thirst for blood. This kingdom was demolished the next year by the combined forces of the Emperor and the bishop, but a further consequence of their defeat was the exclusion of Protestantism from the city, which submitted again to episcopal authority. About the Zwinglian 'Sacramentarianism' Luther wrote at that time, 'God will mercifully do away with this scandal, so that it may not, like that of Münster, have to be done away with by force.'

Butzer, however, did not allow himself to be deterred or wearied. His wish was that the agreement in doctrine which had already been arrived at between Luther and the South Germans admitted to the Swabian League, should be publicly and emphatically acknowledged and expressed. He laboured and hoped to convince even the people of Zurich and the other Swiss that they attached—as, in fact, they did—too harsh a meaning to Luther's doctrines, and so to induce them to reconcile them as nearly as they could with their own. But they could not be persuaded further than to admit that Christ's Body was really present in the Sacrament, as food for the souls of those who partook in faith. They were as suspicious, from their standpoint, of his attempts at mediation, as Luther was from his. Butzer represented to the Landgrave that the South German towns, his allies, were united in doctrine, and that the only objection raised by the Swiss was to the notion that Christ and His Body became actual 'food for the stomach,'—a notion which Luther also refused wholly to entertain. For when the latter said that Christ's Body was eaten with the mouth, he explained at the same time that the mouth indeed only touched the bread and did not reach this Body, and that his doctrine was simply a declaration of a sacramental unity, in so far as the mouth eats the bread which is united with the body in the Sacrament. The matter, said Butzer, was a mere dispute about words, and was only so difficult to settle because they had 'abused and sent each other to the devil too much.'

FIG. 43.—BUTZER. (From the old original woodcut of Reusner.)

The Landgrave Philip wrote to Luther, and Luther now repeated with warmth his own desire for a 'well-established union,' which would enable the Protestants to oppose a common front to the immoderate arrogance of the Papists.

He only warned him again lest the matter should remain 'rotten and unstable in its foundations.' The Landgrave then arranged, with Luther's approval, a conference between Melancthon and Butzer at Cassel for December 27, 1534. Luther sent to them a 'Consideration, whether unity is possible or not.' He repeated in this tract, with studied precision and emphasis, those tenets of his doctrine to which Butzer had referred. The matter, he said, ought not to remain uncertain or ambiguous. But when Butzer now agreed with Luther's own opinion, and sent to him at Wittenberg an explanation that Christ's Body was truly present, but not as food for the stomach, Luther, in January 1535,declared as his judgment, that, since the South German preachers were willing to teach in accordance with the Augsburg Confession, he, for his part, neither could nor would refuse such concord; and since they distinctly confessed that Christ's Body was really and substantially presented and eaten, he could not, if their hearts agreed with their words, find fault with these words. He would only prefer, as there was still too much mistrust among his own brethren, that the act of concord should not be concluded quite so suddenly, but that time should be allowed for a general quieting down. 'Thus,' he said, 'our people will be able to moderate their suspicion or ill-will, and finally let it drop; and if thus the troubled waters are calmed on both sides, a real and permanent union can be ultimately brought about.' Of the Swiss no notice was taken in these negotiations.

Meanwhile Butzer and Philip had to rest content with this; and was it not an important step forwards? This work of union, together with the Council which was to help in uniting the whole Church, took a prominent place during the next few years of Luther's life and labours.

CHAPTER II.

NEGOTIATIONS RESPECTING A COUNCIL AND UNION AMONG THE PROTESTANTS.— THE LEGATE VERGERIUS 1535.— THE WITTENBERG CONCORD 1536.

Pope Paul III., who succeeded Clement VII. in October 1534, seemed at once determined to bring about in reality the promised Council. And in fact he was quite earnest in the matter. He was not so indifferent as his predecessor to the real interests of the Church and the need of certain reforms, and he hoped, like a clever politician, to turn the Council, which could now no longer be evaded, to the advantage of the Papacy. With this object, and with a view in particular of arranging the place where the Council should be held, which he proposed should be Mantua, he sent a nuncio, the Cardinal Vergerius, to Germany.

In August 1535 Luther was desired by his Elector to submit an opinion on the proposals of the Pope. He thought it sufficient to repeat the answer he had given two years before, namely, that the prince had then fully expressed his zeal for the restoration of Church unity by means of a Council, but at the same time had required that its decisions should be strictly according to God's Word, and declared that he could not give any definite consent without his allies. Luther still declined, moreover, to believe that the project of a Council was sincere.

The university of Wittenberg had been removed during the summer to Jena, on account of a fresh outbreak of the plague, or at all events an alarm of it, and there they remained till the following February. Luther, however, would not listen to the idea of leaving Wittenberg. This time he could stay there in all rest and cheerfulness with Bugenhagen, and make merry with the idle fears of others. To the Elector, who was full of anxiety about him, Luther wrote on July 9, saying that only one or two cases of the disease had appeared; the air was not yet poisoned. The dog-days being at hand, and the young people frightened, they might as well be allowed to walk about, to calm their thoughts, until it was seen what would happen. He noticed, however, that some had 'caught ulcers in their pockets, others colic in their books, and others gout in their papers;' some, too, had no doubt eaten their mother's letters, and hence got heart-ache and homesickness. The Christian authorities, he said, must provide some strong medicine against such a disease, lest mortality might arise in consequence,—a medicine that would defy Satan, the enemy of all arts and discipline. He was astonished to find how much more was known of the great plague at Wittenberg in other parts than in the town itself, where in truth it did not exist, and how much bigger and fatter lies grew the farther they travelled. He assured his friend Jonas, who had gone away with the university, that, thanks to God, he was living there in solitude, in perfect health and comfort; only there was a dearth of beer in the town, though he had enough in his own cellar. Nor did Luther afterwards give way to fear when compelled to acknowledge several fatal cases of the plague, and when his own coachman once seemed to be stricken with it. He himself was a sufferer, throughout the winter, from a cough and other catarrhic affections. 'But my greatest illness,' he wrote to a friend, 'is, that the sun has so long shone upon me,—a plague which, as you know well, is very common, and many die of it.'

The Papal nuncio now arrived at Wittenberg, and desired to speak to Luther in person. After an interview at Halle with the Archbishop Albert, he had taken the road through

Wittenberg on his way to visit the Elector of Brandenburg at Berlin. On the afternoon of November 6, a Saturday, he entered Wittenberg in state, with twenty-one horses and an ass, intending to take up his quarters there for the night, and was received with all due honour at the Elector's castle by the governor Metzsch. Luther was invited, at the nuncio's request, to sup with him that evening, but as the former declined the invitation, he was asked with Bugenhagen to take breakfast with him the next morning. It was the first time, since his summons by Caietan at Augsburg in 1518, that Luther had to speak with a Papal legate—Luther, who had long since been condemned by the Pope as an abominable child of corruption, and who in turn had declared the Pope to be Antichrist. So important must Vergerius have thought it, to attempt to influence, if even only partially, the powerful adviser of the Protestant princes, and thereby to prevent him from checkmating his plans in regard to a Council. And in this respect Vergerius must have had considerable confidence in himself.

The next morning Luther ordered his barber to come at an unusually early hour. Upon the latter expressing his surprise, Luther said jokingly, 'I have to go to the Papal nuncio; if only I look young when he sees me, he may think "Fie, the devil, if Luther has played us such tricks before he is an old man, what won't he do when he is one?"' Then, in his best clothes and with a gold chain round his neck, he drove to the castle with the town-priest Bugenhagen (Pomeranus). 'Here go,' he said, as he stepped into the carriage, 'the Pope of Germany and Cardinal Pomeranus, the instruments of God!'

Before the legate he 'acted,' as he expressed it, 'the complete Luther.' He employed towards him only the most indispensable forms of civility, and made use of the 'most ill-humoured' language. Thus he asked him whether he was looked upon in Italy as a drunken

German. When they came to speak about the settlement of the Church questions in dispute by a Council, Vergerius reminded him that one individual fallible man had no right to consider himself wiser than the Councils, the ancient Fathers, and other theologians of Christendom. To this Luther replied that the Papists were not really in earnest about a Council, and, if it were held, they would only care to treat about such trifles as monks' cowls, priests' tonsures, rules of diet, and so forth; whereupon the legate turned to one of his attendants, who was sitting by, with the words 'he has hit the right nail on the head.' Luther went on to assert that they, the Evangelicals, had no need of a Council, being already fully assured about their own doctrine, though other poor souls might need one, who were led astray by the tyranny of the Popedom. Nevertheless he promised to attend the proposed Council, even though he should be burned by it. It was the same to him, he said, whether it was held at Mantua, Padua, or Florence, or anywhere else. 'Would you come to Bologna?' said Vergerius. Luther asked, thereupon, to whom Bologna belonged, and on being told 'to the Pope,' 'Gracious heavens,' he exclaimed, 'has the Pope seized that town too?—Very well, I will come to you even there.' Vergerius politely hinted that the Pope himself would not refuse to come to Wittenberg. 'Let him come,' said Luther; 'we shall be very glad to see him.' 'But,' said Vergerius, 'would you have him come with arms or without?' 'As he pleases,' replied Luther; 'we shall be ready to receive him in either way.' When the legate, after their meal, was mounting his horse to depart, he said to Luther, 'Be sure to hold yourself in readiness for the Council.' 'Yes, sir,' was the reply, 'with this my very neck and head.'

Vergerius afterwards related that he had found Luther to be coarse in conversation, and his Latin bad, and had answered him as far as possible in monosyllables. The excuse he urged for his interview was that Luther and Bugenhagen were the only men of learning at Wittenberg, with whom he could converse in Latin. He evidently felt himself unpleasantly deceived in the expectations and projects he had formed before the meeting. Ten years later, when his conflict with Evangelical doctrine had taught him thoroughly its real meaning and value, this high dignitary himself became a convert to it.

In the meantime, while the eyes of all were fixed upon the approaching Council, the state of affairs in Germany was eminently favourable to the Evangelicals.

The Emperor, during the summer of 1535, was detained abroad by his operations against the corsair Chaireddin Barbarossa in Tunis, and Luther rejoiced over the victory with which God blessed his arms. The King of France was threatening with fresh claims on Italian territory. The jealousy between Austria and Bavaria still continued. With regard to the Church, King Ferdinand learned to value Lutheranism at any rate as a barrier against the progress of the more dangerous doctrines of Zwingli. John Frederick journeyed in November 1535 to Vienna, to receive from him at length, in the name of the Emperor, the investiture of the Electorship, and met with a friendly reception.

Under these circumstances the Schmalkaldic League resolved, at a convention at Schmalkald in December 1535, to invite other States of the Empire, which were not yet recognised in the Religious Peace as members of the Augsburg Confession, to join them. The Dukes Barnim and Philip of Pomerania had now accepted this Confession. Philip also married a sister of John Frederick. Luther performed the marriage service on the evening of February 27 at Torgau, and Bugenhagen pronounced, the next morning, the customary benediction on the young couple, Luther being prevented from doing so by a fresh attack of giddiness. The following spring a convention of the allies at Frankfort-on-the-Main received the Duke of

Würtemberg, the Dukes of Pomerania, the princes of Anhalt, and several towns into their league.

Outside Germany, the Kings of France and England sought fellowship with the allies. Ecclesiastical and religious questions, of course, had first to be considered; and Luther with others was called on for his advice.

King Francis, so many of whose Evangelical subjects were complaining of oppression and persecution, was anxious, as he was now meditating a new campaign in Italy, to secure an alliance with the German Protestants against the Emperor, and accordingly pretended with great solicitude that he had in view important reforms in the Church, and would be glad of their assistance. They were invited to send Melancthon and Luther to him for that purpose. With these he negotiated also in person. Melancthon felt himself much attracted by the prospect thus opened to him of rendering important and useful service. The Elector, however, refused him permission to go, and rebuked him for having already entangled himself so far in the affair. Melancthon's expectations were certainly very vain: the King only cared for his political interests, and in no case would he grant to any of his subjects the right to entertain or act upon religious convictions which ran counter to his own theory of the Church. Moreover, John Frederick's relations with King Ferdinand had by this time become so peaceful, that the Elector was anxious not to disturb them by an alliance with the enemy of the Emperor. Melancthon, however, was much excited by his refusal and reproof; he suspected that others had maliciously intrigued against him with his prince. Luther, at first moved by Melancthon's wish and the entreaties of French Evangelicals, had earnestly begged the Elector to permit Melancthon 'in the name of God to go to France.' 'Who knows,' he said, 'what God may wish to do?' He was afterwards startled on his friend's account by the severe letter of the Elector, but was obliged to acknowledge that the latter was right in his distrust of the affair.

An alliance with England would have promised greater security, inasmuch as with Henry VIII. there was no longer any fear of his return to the Papacy, and with regard to the proceedings about his marriage, a reconciliation with the Emperor was scarcely to be expected. Envoys from him appeared in 1535 in Saxony and at the meeting at Schmalkald. Henry also wished for Melancthon, in order to discuss with him matters of orthodoxy and Church government, and Luther again begged permission of the Elector for him to go. But it was clearly seen from the negotiations conducted with the English envoys in Germany, how slender were the hopes of effecting any agreement with Henry VIII. on the chief points, such as the doctrine of Justification or of the mass, since the English monarch insisted every whit as strictly upon that Catholic orthodoxy, to which he still adhered, as he did upon his opposition to Papal power. Luther had already in January grown sick to loathing of the futile negotiations with England: 'professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (Rom. i. 22). He advised therefore, in his opinion submitted to the Elector, that they should have patience with respect to England and the proper reforms in that quarter, but guarded himself against deviating on that account from the fundamental doctrines of belief, or conceding more to the King of England than they would to the Emperor and the Pope. As to contracting a political alliance with Henry, he left that question, as a temporal matter, for the prince and his advisers to decide; but it seemed to him dangerous, where no real sympathy prevailed. How hazardous it was to have anything to do with Henry VIII. was shown immediately after by his conduct towards his second wife Anna Boleyn, whom he had executed on May 19, 1536. Luther called this act a monstrous tragedy.

Among the German Protestants, however, the negotiations respecting the Sacramental doctrine were happily brought to maturity in a duly formulated 'Concord.' Peace also was secured with the Swiss, and therewith the possibility of an eventual alliance.

Now that Luther had once felt confidence in these attempts at union, he took the work in hand himself and proceeded steadily with it. In the autumn of 1535 he sent letters to a number of South German towns, addressed to preachers and magistrates—to Augsburg, Strasburg, Ulm, and Esslingen. He proposed a meeting or conference, at which they might learn to know each other better, and see what was to be borne with, what complied with, and what winked at. He wished nothing more ardently than to be permitted to end his life, now near its close, in peace, charity, and unity of spirit with his brethren in the faith. They also should 'continue thus, helping, praying, and striving that such unity might be firm and lasting, and that the devil's jaws might be stopped, who had gloried hugely in their want of unity, crying out "Ha! ha! I have won."' These letters plainly show how glad was Luther now to see the good cause so advanced, and to be able to further it yet more. Both in them and in his correspondence with the Elector about the proposed meeting, he advised not to enlist too many associates, that there might be no restless, obstinate heads among them, to spoil the affair. He knew of such among his own adherents—men who went too far for him in the zeal of dogma.

The conference was appointed to be held at Eisenach in the following spring, on May 14, the fourth Sunday after Easter. Luther's state of health would not permit him to undertake a journey to any distant place or in the winter. Just at this time, moreover, in March 1536, he had been tormented for weeks by a new malady, an intolerable pain in the left hip. Later on, he told one of his friends that he had with Christ risen from the dead at Easter (April 16), for he had been so ill at that time, that he firmly believed that his time had come to depart and be with Christ, for which he longed.

The South Germans readily accepted the invitation. The Strasburgers passed it on to the Swiss, and specially desired that Bullinger from Zurich might take part in the conference. The Swiss, however, who had received no direct invitation from Wittenberg, declined the proposal; they wished to adhere simply to their own articles of faith, which they had just formulated anew in the so-called 'First Helvetian Confession,' and which had expressly acknowledged at least a spiritual nutriment to be offered in the Sacramental symbols. They could not see anything to be gained by personal discussion. But they requested that their Confession might be kindly shown to Luther, and Bullinger sent him special greetings from himself and the Evangelical Churches of Switzerland. The preachers who were sent as deputies to Eisenach from the various South German towns, journeyed by way of Frankfort-on-the-Main, where just then the Schmalkaldic allies were assembled. On May 10 they went on, eleven in number, to Eisenach; they represented the communities of Strasburg, Augsburg, Memmingen, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Fürfeld, and Frankfort.

At the last moment the whole success, nay even the very plan of the conference, was imperilled. Melancthon had already been anxious and despondent, fearing a fresh and violent outburst of the controversy as a consequence of the impending discussion. Luther had just been freshly excited against the Zwinglians by a writing found among the papers Zwingli left behind him, and which Bullinger had published with high eulogiums upon the author, and also by a correspondence that had just appeared between Zwingli and Oecolampadius. Butzer, however, and his friends still wished to maintain their intimacy with these Zwinglians, and this correspondence was prefaced by an introduction from his own pen. Furthermore, letters had reached

Luther, representing that the people in the South German towns were not really taught the true Bodily Presence in the Sacrament. In addition to this, severe after-effects of his old illness again attacked him, rendering him unfit to travel to Eisenach. Accordingly, on May 12 he wrote to the deputies begging them to journey as far as Grimma, where he would either appear in person, or, if too weak, could at all events more easily communicate by writing to them and his friends.

The deputies, however, came straight to him at Wittenberg. In Thuringia they were joined by the pastors Menius of Eisenach and Myconius of Gotha, two of Luther's friends who with him were honestly desirous of unity. The constant personal intercourse kept up during the journey served greatly to promote a mutual understanding.

Thus on Sunday, May 21, they arrived at length at Wittenberg.

The next day, the two Strasburgers, Capito and Butzer, held a preliminary interview with Luther, whose physical weakness made any lengthy negotiations very difficult. He expressed to them candidly and emphatically his desire, repeated again and again, that they should declare themselves at one with him. He would rather, however, leave matters as they had been, than enter into a union which might be only feigned or artificial, and must make bad worse. With regard to the Zwinglian publications, Butzer answered that he and his friends were in no way responsible for them, and that the preface, which consisted of a letter from himself, had been printed without his knowledge and consent. With regard to the doctrine of the Sacrament, the only question now left to decide was whether the unworthy and godless communicants verily partook of the Lord's Body. Luther maintained that they did: it was to him the necessary consequence of a Bodily Presence, such as took place simply by virtue of the institution and sure promise of Christ, by which faith must abide in full trust and belief. Butzer expressed his decided assent to the doctrine of objective Presence and presentation; but the actual reception of the Lord's Body, as offered from above, he could only concede to those communicants who, at least through some faith, placed themselves in an inward spiritual relation to that Body and accepted the institution of Christ, not to those who were simply there with their bodies and bodily mouths. To enable one to speak of a partaking of the Body, he was satisfied with that faith which was not exactly the right faith of the heart, and was connected with moral unworthiness, so that such guests ate to their own condemnation. He thus acknowledged that the unworthy, but not the man wholly devoid of faith, could partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. Luther, therefore, could feel assured that Butzer agreed with him in rejecting every view which held that, in the Sacrament, the Body of Christ was present only in the subjective representation and the imagination, or that faith there rose up out of itself, so to speak, to the Lord, instead of merely grasping at what was offered, and thereby being quickened and made strong. But it is unmistakable, that Luther and Butzer conceived in different ways both the manner of the Presence and the manner of partaking,—each of these, indeed, in a mysterious sense and one very difficult to be defined. Luther could scarcely have failed to observe the difference, which still remained between them, and the defect from which, according to his own convictions, the doctrine of the South Germans still suffered. The question was, whether he could look beyond this, and whether in the doctrine for which he had fought so keenly, he should be able and willing to distinguish between what was essential on the one hand, and what was non-essential or less essential on the other.

On the Tuesday all the deputies assembled at his house, together with his Wittenberg friends, and Menius and

Myconius. Butzer having spoken on the deputies' behalf, Luther conferred with them separately, and after they had declared their unanimous concurrence with Butzer, he withdrew with his friends into another room for a private consultation. On his return, he declared, on behalf of himself and his friends, that, after having heard from all present their answers and statement of belief, they were agreed with them, and welcomed them as beloved brethren in the Lord. As to the objection they had about the godless partakers, if they confessed that the unworthy received with the other communicants the Body of Christ, they would not quarrel on that point. Luther, so Myconius tells us, spoke these words with great spirit and animation, as was apparent from his eyes and his whole countenance. Capito and Butzer could not refrain from tears. All stood with folded hands and gave thanks to God.

On the following days other points were discussed, such as the significance of infant baptism, and the practice of confession and absolution, as to which an understanding was necessary, and was arrived at without any difficulty. The South Germans had also to be reassured about some individual forms of worship, unimportant in themselves, and which they found to have been retained from Catholic usage in the Saxon churches.

On the Thursday the proceedings were interrupted by the festival of the Ascension. Luther preached the evening sermon of that day on the text, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Myconius relates of this sermon, 'I have often heard Luther before, but it seemed to me then as if not he alone were speaking, but heaven was thundering in the name of Christ.'

On Saturday Butzer and Capito delivered themselves of their commissions on behalf of the Swiss. Luther declared after reading the Confession which they brought, that certain expressions in it were objectionable, but added a wish that the Strasburgers would treat with them further on the subject, and the latter led him to hope that the communities in Switzerland, weary of dispute, desired unity.

The spirit of brotherly union received a touching and beautiful expression on the Sunday in the common celebration of the Sacrament, and in sermons preached by Alber of Reutlingen in the early morning, and by Butzer in the middle of the day.

The next morning, May 29, the meeting concluded with the signing of the articles which Melancthon had been commissioned to draw up. They recognised the receiving of Christ's Body at the Sacrament by those who 'ate unworthily,' without saying anything about the faithless. The deputies who signed their names declared their common acceptance of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology. This formula, however, was only to be published after it had received the assent of the communities whom it concerned, together with their pastors and civil authorities. 'We must be careful,' said Luther, 'not to raise the song of victory prematurely, nor give others an occasion for complaining that the matter was settled without their knowledge and in a corner.' Luther himself began on the same Monday to write letters, inviting assent from different quarters to their proceedings. Among his own associates, at any rate, his intimate friend Amsdorf at Magdeburg had not been so conciliatory as himself: Luther waited eight days before informing him of the result of the conference.

Thus, then, unity of confession was established for the German Protestants, apart from the Swiss, for none of the Churches which had been represented at the meeting refused their assent. Luther now advanced a step towards the Swiss by writing to the burgomaster Meyer at Basle, who was particularly anxious for union, and who returned him a very friendly and hopeful answer. Butzer sought to work with them further in the same direction. But they could not reconcile themselves to the Wittenberg articles.

They – that is to say, the magistrates and clergy of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and some other towns—were content to express their joy at Luther's present friendly state of mind, together with a hope of future unity, and besought Butzer to inform Luther further about their own Confession and their objections to his own. Butzer was anxious to do this at a convention which the Schmalkaldic allies appointed to meet at Schmalkald, in view of the Council having been announced to be held in February 1537.

CHAPTER III.

NEGOTIATIONS RESPECTING A COUNCIL AND UNION AMONG THE PROTESTANTS (*continuation*) :—MEETING AT SCHMALKALD, 1537.—PEACE WITH THE SWISS.—LUTHER'S FRIENDSHIP WITH THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.

A FEW days after the Protestants had effected an agreement at Wittenberg the announcement was issued from Rome of a Council, to be held at Mantua in the following year. The Pope already indicated with sufficient clearness the action he intended to take at it. He declared in plain terms that the Council was to extirpate the Lutheran pestilence, and did not even wish that the corrupt Lutheran books should be laid before it, but only extracts from them, and these with a Catholic refutation. Luther, therefore, had now to turn his energies at once in this direction.

He agreed, nevertheless, with Melancthon that the invitation should be accepted, although the Elector John Frederick was opposed to such a Council from the very first. It would be better, Luther thought, to protest at the Council itself against any unlawful or unjust proceeding. He hoped to be able to speak before the assembly at least like a Christian and a man.

The Elector thereupon commissioned him to compile and set forth the propositions or articles of faith, which, according to his conviction, it would be necessary to insist on at the Council, and directed him to call in for this purpose other theologians to his assistance. Luther accordingly drew up a statement. A few days after Christmas he laid it before his Wittenberg colleagues, and likewise before

Amsdorf of Magdeburg, Spalatin of Altenburg, and Agricola of Eisleben. The last named was endeavouring to exchange his post at the high school at Eisleben, under the Count of Mansfeld, with whom he had fallen out, for a professor's chair at Wittenberg, which had been promised him by the Elector; and now, on receiving his invitation to the conference, he left Eisleben for good without permission, taking his wife and child with him. Luther welcomed him as an old friend and invited him to his house as a guest. Luther's statement was unanimously approved, and sent to the Elector on January 3.

Even in this summary of belief, intended as it was for common acceptance and for submission to a Council, Luther emphasised, with all the fulness and keenness peculiar to himself throughout the struggle, his antagonism to Roman Catholic dogma and Churchdom. Fondly as he clung at that time to reconciliation among the Protestants, he saw no possibility of peace with Rome.

As the first and main article he declared plainly that faith alone in Jesus could justify a man; on that point they dared not yield, though heaven and earth should fall. The mass he denounced as the greatest and most horrible abomination, inasmuch as it was 'downright destructive of the first article,' and as the chiefest of Papal idolatries; moreover, this dragon's tail had begotten many other kinds of vermin and abominations of idolatry. With regard to the Papacy itself, the Augsburg Confession had been content to condemn it by silence, not having taken any notice of it in its articles on the essence and nature of the Christian Church. Luther now would have it acknowledged, 'that the Pope was not by divine right (*jure divino*) or by warrant of God's Word the head of all Christendom,' that position belonging to One alone, by name Jesus Christ; and, furthermore, 'that the Pope was the true Antichrist, who sets himself up and exalts himself above and against Christ.' As for the Council, he expected that the Evangelicals there present would have to stand before the Pope himself and the devil, who would listen to nothing, but consider simply how to condemn and kill them. They should, therefore, not kiss the feet of their enemy, but say to him, 'The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!' (Zach. iii. 2).

The allies accordingly were anxious to consult together and determine at Schmalkald what conduct to pursue at the Council. An imperial envoy and a Papal nuncio wished also to attend their meeting. The princes and representatives of the towns brought their theologians with them to the number of about forty in all. The Elector John Frederick brought Luther, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Spalatin.

On January 29 the Wittenberg theologians were summoned by their prince to Torgau. From thence they travelled slowly by Grimma and Altenburg, where they were entertained with splendour at the prince's castles, then by Weimar, where, on Sunday, February 4, Luther preached a sermon, and so on to the place of meeting. Luther had left his family and house in the care of his guest Agricola. On February 7 they arrived at Schmalkald.

The theologians at first were left unemployed. The members of the convention only gradually assembled. The envoy of the Emperor came on the 14th. Luther made up his mind for a stay there of four weeks. He preached on the 9th in the town church before the prince himself. The church he found, as he wrote to Jonas, so large and lofty, that his voice sounded to him like that of a mouse. During the first few days he enjoyed the leisure and rejoiced in the healthy air and situation of the place.

He was already suffering, however, from the stone, which had once before attacked him. A medical friend ascribed it partly to the dampness of the inns and the sheets he slept in. However, the attack passed off easily this time, and on the 14th he was able to tell Jonas that he was better. But he grew very tired of the idle time at Schmalkald. He said jokingly about the good entertainment there, that he and his friends were living with the Landgrave Philip and the Duke of Würtemberg like beggars, who had the best bakers, ate bread and drank wine with the Nürembergers, and received their meat and fish from the Elector's court. They had the best trout in the world, but they were cooked in a sauce with the other fish; and so on.

The Elector soon applied to him for an opinion as to taking part in the Council, which Luther again recommended should not be bluntly refused. A refusal, he said, would exactly please the Pope, who wished for nothing so much as obstacles to the Council; it was for this reason that, in speaking of the extirpation of heresy, he held up the Evangelicals as a 'bugbear,' in order to frighten them from the project. Good people might likewise object, on the ground that the troubles with the Turks and the Emperor's engagement in the war with France, were made use of by the Evangelicals to refuse the Council, whilst in reality the knaves at Rome were reckoning on the Turkish and French wars to prevent the Council from coming to pass.

Luther now received through Butzer the communications from Switzerland, together with a letter from Meyer, the burgomaster of Basle. To the latter he sent on the 17th of the month a cheerful and friendly reply. He did not wish to induce him to make any further explanations and promises, but his whole mind was bent upon mutual forgiveness, and bearing with one another in patience and gentleness. In this spirit he earnestly entreated Meyer to work with him. 'Will you faithfully exhort your people,' he said, 'that they may all help to quiet, soften, and promote the matter to the best of their power, that they may not scare the birds at roost.' He promised also, for his part, 'to do his utmost in the same direction.'

This same day, however, Luther's malady returned; he concluded his letter with the words, 'I cannot write now all I would, for I have been a useless man all day, owing to this painful stone.' The next day, Sunday, when he preached a powerful sermon before a large congregation, the malady became much worse, and a week followed of violent pain, during which his body swelled, he was constantly sick, and his weakness generally increased. Several doctors, including one called in from Erfurt, did their utmost to relieve him. 'They gave me physic,' he said afterwards, 'as if I were a great ox.' Mechanical contrivances were employed, but without effect. 'I was obliged,' he said, 'to obey them, that it might not look as if I neglected my body.'

His condition appeared desperate. With death before his eyes, he thought of his arch-enemy the Pope, who might triumph over this, but over whom he felt certain of victory even in death. 'Behold,' he cried to God, 'I die an enemy of Thy enemies, cursed and banned by Thy foe, the Pope. May he, too, die under Thy ban, and both of us stand at Thy judgment bar on that day.' The Elector, deeply moved, stood by his bed, and expressed his anxiety lest God might take away with Luther His beloved Word. Luther comforted him by saying that there were many faithful men who, by God's help, would become a wall of strength; nevertheless, he could not conceal from the prince his apprehension that, after he was gone, discord would arise even among his colleagues at Wittenberg. The Elector promised him to care for his wife and children as his own. Luther's natural love for them, as he afterwards remarked, made the prospect of parting very hard for him to bear. To his sorrowing friends he still was able to be humorous. When Melancthon, on seeing him, began to cry bitterly, he reminded him of a saying of their friend, the hereditary marshal, Hans Löser, that to drink good beer was no art, but to drink sour beer, and then continued, in the words of Job, 'What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' And again: 'The wicked Jews,' he said, 'stoned Stephen; my stone, the villain! is stoning me.' But not for an instant did he lose his trust in God and resignation to His will. When afraid of going mad with the pain, he comforted himself with the thought that Christ was his wisdom, and that God's wisdom remained immutable. Seeing, as he did, the devil at work in his torture, he felt confident that even if the devil tore him to pieces Christ would revenge His servant, and God would tear the devil to pieces in return. Only one thing he would fain have prayed his God to grant—that he might die in the country of his Elector; but he was willing and ready to depart whenever God might summon him. Upon being seized with a fit of vomiting he sighed, 'Alas, dear Father, take the little soul into Thy hand; I will be grateful to Thee for it. Go hence, thou dear little soul, go, in God's name!'

At length an attempt was actually made to remove him to Gotha, the necessary medical appliances being not procurable at Schmalkald. On the 26th of the month the Erfurt physician, Sturz, drove him thither, together with Bugenhagen, Spalatin, and Myconius, in one of the Elector's carriages. Another carriage followed them, with instruments and a pan of charcoal, for warming cloths. On driving off, Luther said to his friends about him, 'The Lord fill you with His blessing, and with hatred of the Pope.'

The first day they could not venture farther than Tambach, a few miles distant, the road over the mountains being very rough. The jolting of the carriage caused him intolerable torture. But it effected what the doctors could not. The following night the pain was terminated, and the feeling of relief and recovery made him full of joy and thankfulness. A messenger was sent at once, at two o'clock in the morning, with the news to Schmalkald, and Luther himself wrote a letter to his 'dearly-loved' Melancthon. To his wife he wrote saying, 'I have been a dead man, and had commended you and the little ones to God and to our good Lord Jesus. . . . I grieved very much for your sakes.' But God, he went on to say, had worked a miracle with him; he felt like one newly-born; she must thank God, therefore, and let the little ones thank their heavenly Father, without whom they would assuredly have lost their earthly one.

But on the 28th already, after his safe arrival at Gotha, he suffered so severe a relapse that during that night he thought, from his extreme weakness, that his end was near. He then gave to Bugenhagen some last directions, which the latter afterwards committed to writing, as the 'Confession and Last Testament of the Venerable Father.' Herein Luther expressed his cheerful conviction that he had done rightly in attacking the Papacy with the Word of God. He begged his 'dearest Philip' (Melancthon) and other colleagues to forgive anything in which he might have offended them. To his faithful Kate he sent words of thanks and comfort, saying that now for the twelve years of happiness which they had spent together, she must accept this sorrow. Once more he sent greetings to the preachers and burghers of Wittenberg. He begged his Elector and the Landgrave not to be disturbed by the charges made against them by the Papists of having robbed the property of the Church, and recommended them to trust to God in their labours on behalf of the gospel.

The next morning, however, he was again better and stronger. Butzer, who in regard to unity of confession and his relations with the Swiss had not been able to have any further conversation with Luther at Schmalkald, had at once, on receiving the good news from Tambach, gone straight to Luther at Gotha, accompanied by the preacher Wolfhart from Augsburg. Luther, notwithstanding his suffering, now discussed with them this matter, so important in his eyes. As an honest man, to whom nothing was so distasteful as 'dissimulation,' he earnestly warned them against all 'crooked ways.' The Swiss, in case he died, should be referred to his letter to Meyer; should God allow him to live and become strong, he would send them a written statement himself.

While, however, he was still at Gotha, the crisis of his illness passed, and he was relieved entirely of the cause of his suffering. The journey was continued cautiously and slowly, and a good halt was made at Weimar. From Wittenberg there came to nurse him a niece, who lived in his house: probably Lene Kaufmann, the daughter of his sister. To his wife he wrote from Tambach, telling her that she need not accept the Elector's offer to drive her to him, it being now unnecessary. On March 14 he arrived again at his home. His recovery had made good progress, though, as he wrote to Spalatin, even eight days afterwards his legs could hardly support him.

Meanwhile the conference of the allies at Schmalkald resulted in their deciding to decline the Papal invitation to the Council. They informed the Emperor, in reply, that the Council which the Pope had in view was something very different to the one so long demanded by the German Diets; what they wanted was a free Council, and one on German, not Italian territory.

With regard to Luther's articles, which he had drawn up in view of a Council, they saw no occasion to occupy themselves with their consideration. To their official Confession of Augsburg, which had formed among other things the groundwork and charter of the Religious Peace, and to the Apology, drawn up by Melancthon in reply to the Catholic 'Refutation,' they desired, however, now to add a protest against the authority and the Divine right of the Papacy. Melancthon prepared it in the true spirit of Luther, though in a calmer and more moderate tone than was usual with his friend. The majority of the theologians present at Schmalkald testified their assent to

Luther's articles by subscribing their names. Luther had his statement printed the following year. The Emperor, on account of the war with the Turks and the renewal of hostilities with France, had no time to think of compelling the allies to take part in a Council, and was quite content that no Council should be held at all. Whether the Pope himself, as Luther supposed, counted secretly on this result, and was glad to see it happen, may remain a matter of uncertainty.

At Schmalkald the seal was now set upon the Concord, which had been concluded the previous year at Wittenberg, and then submitted for ratification to the different German princes and towns, the formula there adopted being now signed by all the theologians present, and the agreement of the princes to abide by it being duly announced. Towards the Swiss, who declined to waive their objections to the Wittenberg articles, Luther maintained firmly the standpoint indicated in his letter to Meyer. Thus, in the following December he wrote himself to those evangelical centres in Switzerland from which Butzer had brought him the communication to Gotha; while the next year, in May 1538, he sent a friendly reply to a message from Bullinger, and again in June he wrote once more to the Swiss, on receiving an answer from them to his first letter. His constant wish and entreaty was that they should at least be friendly to, and expect the best of one another, until the troubled waters were calmed. He fully acknowledged that the Swiss were a very pious people, who earnestly wished to do what was right and proper. He rejoiced at this, and hoped that God, even if only a hedge obstructed, would help in time to remove all errors. But he could not ignore or disregard that on which no agreement had yet been arrived at; and he was right in supposing, and said so openly to the Swiss, that upon their side, as well as upon his own, there were many who looked upon unity not only with displeasure but even with suspicion. He himself had constantly to explain misinterpretations of his doctrine, and he did so with composure. He had never, he said, taught that Christ, in order to be present at the Sacrament, comes down from heaven; but he left to Divine omnipotence the manner in which His Body is verily given to the guests at His table. But he must guard himself, on the other hand, against the notion that, with the attitude he now adopted, he had renounced his former doctrine. And with this doctrine he held firmly to the conception of a Presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament different to and apart from that Presence for purely spiritual nourishment on which the Swiss now insisted. When Bullinger expressed his surprise that he should still talk of a difference in doctrine, he gave up offering any more explanations on the subject; and the Swiss, for their part, after his second letter, made no further attempt to effect a more perfect agreement. Luther's desire was to keep on terms of peace and friendship with them, notwithstanding the difference still notoriously existing between both parties. On this very account he was loth to rake up the difference again by further explanations. By acting thus he believed he should best promote an ultimate understanding and unity, which was still the object of his hopes.

So far, therefore, during the years immediately following the death of Zwingli, success had attended the efforts to heal the fatal division which separated from Luther and the great Lutheran community those of evangelical sympathies in Switzerland and the South Germans, who were more or less subject to their influence, and which had excited the minds on both sides with such violence and passion. So far Luther himself had laboured to promote this result with uprightness and zeal; he had conquered much suspicion once directed against himself, he had sought means of peace; he had restrained the disturbing zeal of his own friends and followers, such as Amsdorf or Osiander at Nüremberg.

We must not omit finally to mention, as an important event of these years and a testimony to Luther's disposition and sentiments, the friendly relations now formed between himself and the so-called Bohemian and Moravian Brethren. We have already had occasion to notice, after the Leipzig disputation in 1519, and again, in particular, after Luther's return from the Wartburg, an approach, which promised much but was only transitory, between Luther and the large and powerful brotherhood of the Bohemian Utraquists, who, as admirers of Huss and advocates for giving the cup to the laity, had freed themselves from the dominion of Rome. Quietly and modestly, but with a far more penetrating endeavour to restore the purity of Christian life, the small communities of the Moravian Brethren had multiplied by the side of the Hussites, and had patiently endured oppression and persecution. Luther afterwards declared of them, how he had found to his astonishment—a thing unheard of under the Papacy—that, discarding the doctrines of men, they meditated day and night, to the best of their ability, on the laws of God, and were well versed in the Scriptures. It was principally, however, as Luther himself seems to indicate, the commands of Scripture, in the strict and faithful fulfilment of which they sought for true Christianity—with special reference to the commands of Jesus, as expressed by Him in particular in the Sermon on the Mount, and to those precepts which they found in their patterns, the oldest Apostolic communities—that engrossed their attention. With strict discipline, in conformity with these commands, they sought to order and sanctify their congregational life. But of Luther's doctrine of salvation, announced by him mainly on the testimony of St. Paul, or of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, they had as yet no knowledge. They taught of the righteousness to which Christians should attain, as did Augustine and the pious, practical theologians of the middle ages. Hence they were wanting also in freedom in their conception of moral life, and of those worldly duties and blessings to which, according to Luther, the Christian spirit rose by the power of faith. They shunned rather all worldly business in a manner that caused Luther to ascribe to them a certain monastic character. Their priests lived, like Catholics, in celibacy. Another peculiarity of their teaching was, that in striving after a more spiritual conception of life, and under the influence of the writings of the great Englishman Wicliffe, which were largely disseminated among them, they repudiated the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, nor would even allow such a Presence of Christ's Body as was insisted on by Luther. They maintained simply a sacramental, spiritual, effectual presence of Christ, and distinguished from it a substantial Presence, which His Body, they declared, had in heaven alone.

With these, too, as with the Utraquists, Luther became more closely acquainted soon after his return from the Wartburg. The evangelical preacher, Paul Speratus, who was then temporarily working in Moravia, wrote to him about these zealous friends of the gospel, among whom, however, he found much that was objectionable, especially their doctrine of the Sacrament. They themselves sent Luther messages, letters, and writings. Luther, who, in addition to the Catholic theory, had also to combat doubts as to the Real Presence of Christ's Body at the Sacrament, turned in 1523, in a treatise 'On the Adoration of the Sacrament, &c.,' to oppose the declarations of the Brethren on this subject, and then proceeded to draw their attention to other points on which he was unable to agree with them, in the mildest form and with warm acknowledgments of their good qualities, such as, in particular, their strict requirements of Christian moral conduct, which in his own circle he could not possibly expect to see as yet fulfilled. They and Lucas, their elder, however, took umbrage at his remarks; Lucas published a reply, whereupon Luther quietly left them to go their own way.

While Butzer now was prosecuting with success his attempts at union, the Brethren renewed their overtures to Luther. They offered him fresh explanations about the doctrines in dispute, and these explanations he was content to treat as consistent with the truth which he himself maintained, though they differed even from his own actual statements, not only in form but in substance. For example, they distinguished between the Presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament and His existence in heaven, by describing only the latter as a Bodily existence. Practically, the theory of the Brethren, which, however, was by no means clearly defined, agreed most with that represented afterwards by Calvin But Luther saw in it nothing more that was essential, such as would necessitate further controversy, or deter him from friendly intercourse with these pious-minded people. At their desire he published two of their statements of belief in 1533 and 1538 with prefaces from his own pen. In these prefaces he dwelt particularly on the striking differences, as regards Church usages and regulations, between their congregations and his own. But these differences, he said, ought in no way to prevent their fellowship; a difference of usages had always existed among Christian Churches, and with the difference of times and circumstances, was unavoidable. Nor did he withhold a certain sanction and approbation of the dignity with which the Brethren continued to invest the state of celibacy, while refusing, however, to give that sanction the force of a law.

Among the Brethren their gifted and energetic elder John Augusta laboured to promote an alliance with Luther and the German Reformation. He repeatedly appeared (and again in 1540) in person at Wittenberg.

Thus on all sides, wherever the Evangelical word prevailed, Luther saw the bonds of union being firmly tied.

CHAPTER IV.

OTHER LABOURS AND TRANSACTIONS, 1535–39.—ARCHBISHOP ALBERT AND SCHÖNITZ.—AGRICOLA.

Amidst these important and general affairs of the Church, bringing daily fresh labours and fresh anxieties for Luther—labours, however, which, in spite of his bodily sufferings, he undertook with his old accustomed energy—his strength, as in previous years we have observed with reference to his preaching, now no longer sufficed as before for the regular work of his calling. In his official duties at the university the Elector himself, anxiously concerned as he was for its progress, would have spared him as much as possible. For these he arranged, in 1536, an ample stipend. In his announcement of this step he solemnly declared: 'The merciful God has plenteously and graciously vouchsafed to let His holy, redeeming Word, through the teaching of the reverend and most learned, our beloved and good Martin Luther, doctor of Holy Scripture, be made known to all men in these latter days of the world with true Christian understanding, for their comfort and salvation, for which we give Him praise and thanks for ever; and has made known also, in addition to other arts, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, through the conspicuous and rare ability and industry of the learned Philip Melancthon, for the furtherance of the right and Christian comprehension of Holy Scripture.' To each of these two men he now gave a hundred gulden as an addition to his salary as professor, which in Luther's case had hitherto amounted to two hundred gulden. At the same time he released Luther from the obligation of lecturing, and, indeed, from all his other duties at the university.

Luther began, however, this year a new and important course of lectures—the exposition of the Book of Genesis, which, according to his wont, he illustrated with a copious and valuable commentary on the chief points of Christian doctrine and Christian life. They progressed, however, but slowly and with many interruptions; sometimes a whole year was occupied with only a few chapters. The work was not completed until 1545. They were the last lectures he delivered.

In the office of preacher, which he continued to fill voluntarily and without emolument, he undertook again, after he had returned from Schmalkald, and had gained fresh strength and, at least, a temporary recovery from his recent illness, labours at once beyond and more arduous than his ordinary duties. He resumed, in short, the duties of Bugenhagen, who was given leave of absence till 1539 to visit Denmark, for the purpose of organising there, under the new king Christian III., the new Evangelical Church. He preached regularly on week-days, in addition to his Sunday sermons; continuing his discourses, as Bugenhagen had done, though with many interruptions, on the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John. The chancellor Brück wrote to the Elector from Wittenberg on August 27: 'Doctor Martin preaches in the parish church thrice a week; and such mightily good sermons are they, that it seems to me, as everyone is saying, there has never been such powerful preaching here before. He points out in particular the errors of the Popedom, and multitudes come to hear him. He closes his sermons with a prayer against the Pope, his Cardinals and Bishops, and for our Emperor, that God may give him victory and deliver him from the Popedom.'

Among his literary labours he again took in hand in 1539 his German translation of the Bible—the most important work, in its way, of all his life—and persevered with intense and unremitting industry, in order to revise it thoroughly for a new edition, which was published at the end of two years. For this work he assembled around him a circle of learned colleagues, whose assistance he succeeded in obtaining and whom he regularly consulted. These were Melancthon, Jonas, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, Matthew Aurogallus, professor of Hebrew, and afterwards the chaplain Rörer, who attended to the corrections. From outside also some joined them, such as Ziegler, the Leipzig theologian, a man learned in Hebrew. Luther's younger friend Mathesius, who had been Luther's guest in 1540, relates of these meetings how 'Doctor Luther came to them with his old Bible in Latin and his new one in German, and besides these he had always the Hebrew text with him. Philip (Melancthon) brought with him the Greek text, Dr. Kreuziger (Cruciger) besides the Hebrew, the Chaldaic Bible (the translation or paraphrase in use among the ancient Jews); the professors had with them their Rabbis (the Rabbinical writings of the Old Testament). Each one had previously armed himself with a knowledge of the text, and compared the Greek and Latin with the Jewish version. The president then propounded a text, and let the opinions go round;—speeches of wondrous truth and beauty are said to have been made at these sittings.'

In other respects Luther's literary activity was chiefly devoted to the great questions remaining to be dealt with at a Council. In 1539, the year after his publication of the Schmalkaldic Articles, appeared a larger treatise from his pen 'On Councils and Churches,' one of the most exhaustive of his writings, and important to us as showing how firmly and confidently his idea of the Christian Church, as a community of the faithful, was maintained amidst all the practical difficulties which events prepared. He complains of the substitution of the blind, unmeaning word 'Church' —and that even in the Catechism for the young—for the Greek word in the New Testament 'Ecclesia,' as the name of the community or assembly of Christian people. Much misery, he said, had crept in under that word Church, from its being understood as consisting of the Pope and the bishops, priests, and monks. The Christian Church was simply the mass of pious Christian people, who believed in Christ and were endowed with the Holy Spirit, Who daily sanctified them by the forgiveness of sins, and by absolving and purifying them therefrom.

Of Luther's love for his German mother-language, and of the services he rendered it, so conspicuously shown by these his writings, and especially by his persevering industry in his translation of the Bible, we are further reminded by a request he made in a letter of March 1535, to his friend Wenzeslaus Link at Nüremberg. He suddenly in that letter breaks off from the Latin—which was still the customary language of correspondence between theologians—and continues in German, with the words, 'I will speak German, my dear Herr Wenzel,' and then begs his friend to make his servant collect for him all the German pictures, rhymes, books, and ballads that had recently been published at Nüremberg, as he wished to familiarise himself more with the genuine language of the people. Luther himself made a goodly collection of German proverbs. His original manuscript which contained them was inherited by a German family, but unfortunately it was bought about twenty years ago in England. There was published also at Wittenberg, in 1537, a small anonymous book on German names, written (unquestionably by Luther) in Latin, and therefore intended for students. It contains, it is true, many strange mistakes, but it is, nevertheless, a proof of the interest he took in such studies, and is interesting as a maiden effort in this field of national learning.

In the regular government and legal administration of his Saxon Church, Luther did not occupy any post of office. When in 1539 a Consistory was established at Wittenberg for the Electoral district, and afterwards, indeed, for the regulation of marriage and discipline, he did not become a member; he was certainly never called upon or qualified to take part in the exercise of such a jurisdiction. And yet this also was done with his concurrence, and in cases of difficulty he was resorted to for his advice. All Church questions of public interest continued, with this exception, to occupy his independent and influential discussion. And even the moral evils on the domain of civil, municipal and social life, to which Luther at the beginning of the Reformation appeared desirous of extending his preaching of reform, so far, at least, as that preaching represented a general call and exhortation, but which he afterwards seemed to discard altogether as something foreign to his mission, never wholly faded from his purview, or ceased to enlist his active interest. He wrote again in 1539 against usury, much as he had written at an earlier period, remarking to his friends that his book would prick the consciences of petty usurers, but that the big swindlers would only laugh at him in their sleeves. And in publishing his Schmalkaldic Articles he briefly refers again in his preface to the 'countless matters of importance' which a genuine Christian Council would have to mend in the temporal condition of mankind—such as the disunion of princes and states, the usury and avarice, which had spread like a deluge and had become the law, and the sins of unchastity, gluttony, gambling, vanity in dress, disobedience on the part of subjects, servants, and workmen of all trades; as also the removal of peasants, &c. Nor at the same time was he less prompt to interfere on behalf of individuals who were suffering from want and injustice, either by his humble intercession with their lords, or with the sharp sword of his denunciation.

It was Luther's indignation and zeal on such an occasion that caused now his irremediable rupture with the Archbishop, Cardinal Albert, and induced him to attack that magnate as recklessly as he did; for the Cardinal had hitherto been always disposed to treat him with a certain respect; and Luther, on his side, had refrained at least from any open exhibition of hostility. The immediate cause of this rupture was a judicial murder, perpetrated against one John Schönitz (or Schanz) of Halle, on the river Saale. This man had for years had the charge, as the confidential servant of the Archbishop, of the public and even the private funds which his master required for his stately palaces, his luxury, and his sensual enjoyments, refined or coarse, legitimate or illegitimate; and had actually lent him large sums. The Estates of the Archbishopric complained of the demands made on them for money, and rightly suspected that the funds supplied were improperly and dishonestly misappropriated. Schönitz grew alarmed on account of the clandestine 'practices' which he was carrying on for his master. The latter, however, assured him of his protection. But when the Estates refused to grant any more subsidies until a proper account was laid before them, he basely sacrificed his servant in order to extricate himself from his embarrassment. For deceptions alleged to have been practised against himself, he had Schönitz arrested, and confined, in September 1534, in the Castle of Giebichenstein. In vain Schönitz demanded a public trial by impartial judges; in vain did the Imperial Court of Justice give judgment in his favour. A second judgment of the court was answered by Albert's directing the prisoner, who was a citizen of Halle and sprung from an old local family, to be tried on June 21, 1535, at Giebichenstein, by a peasant tribunal hastily summoned from the surrounding villages, for the trial merely, as the rumour ran in Halle, of a horse-stealer. The unhappy prisoner was allowed no regular defence, and no counsel. An admission of guilt was extorted from him by the rack, and he was summarily sentenced to death. Time was only allowed him to say to the bystanders that he confessed himself a sinner in the sight of God, but that he had not deserved this fate. He was quickly strung up on the gallows, where his corpse remained hanging till the wind blew it down in February 1537. Albert took possession of his property. And this was done by the supreme prince of the Roman Church in Germany, who played the part of a modern Mæcenas with regard to art and science.

Whilst now the justices of the town of Halle were protesting against this treatment of their fellow-townsman to the Archbishop, who turned a deaf ear to their remonstrance, and Antony, the brother of the murdered man, exerted himself in vain to vindicate his honour and the rights of their family, Luther was drawn into the affair by the fact that one of his guests, Ludwig Rabe, was threatened with punishment by Albert, for expressions he let fall soon after the deed was committed. Luther thereupon wrote several times to Albert himself, and told him openly he was a murderer, and, for his squandering of Church property, deserved a gallows ten times higher than the Castle of Giebichenstein. He was restrained, however, from taking further steps by the Elector of Brandenburg and other of Albert's influential relatives, who appealed to John Frederick on his behalf, whilst Albert sought to make a cheap compensation to the family of the murdered man, or at least pretended to do so.

When, however, a young Humanist poetaster at Wittenberg, named Lemnius—properly Lemchen—actually glorified the Archbishop in verse, or, as Luther put it, 'made a saint of the devil,' and at the same time vilified some men and women at Wittenberg, Luther read aloud from the pulpit, in 1538, a short indictment, couched in the plainest possible terms, against the shameless libeller, as also against the Archbishop whom he glorified; and this indictment soon appeared in print. And now he no longer refrained from taking up the cause of Schönitz in a pamphlet of some length. When the Duke of Prussia endeavoured once more in a friendly way to dissuade him from his purpose, for the honour of the house of Brandenburg, he replied, 'Wicked sons have sprung from the noble race of David, and princes ought not to disgrace themselves by unprincely vices.' In the pamphlet to his opening he declared that a stone was lying upon his heart which was called 'Deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain' (Prov. xxiv. 11). He denounced the contempt and denial of justice of which the Archbishop was guilty, and at the same time boldly exposed the real objects of those private expenses which the Archbishop, together with his servant, had incurred, and of which the latter was naturally unable to give an account—least of all, those that ministered to his carnal appetites, such as his establishment at Morizburg in Halle. He himself, says Luther, does not judge the Cardinal; he is simply the bearer of the sentence pronounced by the great Judge in heaven. To those who might perhaps have taken exception to his words he says, 'I sit here at Wittenberg, and ask my most gracious lord the Elector for no further favour or protection than what is given to all alike.' Albert found it more prudent to keep silent.

But what disturbed and grieved Luther more than anything else during this, the closing chapter of his life, was the bitter experience he had yet to make in his own religious community, nay, amidst his most intimate companions and friends.

The way of life—in other words, the way of saving faith—was now rediscovered and clearly brought to light; and, as Luther said, a truly moral life should be the consequence. And great pains were taken to stamp this new truth clearly and distinctly on doctrine, and to guard against new errors and perversions. Differences, however, now arose among those who had hitherto worked so loyally together for the establishment of the faith—a beginning of those doctrinal disputes which after Luther's death became so disastrous to his Church. Again and again Luther bitterly complained of the moral wrongs and scandals which proved that the faith, however widely its confession had spread through Germany, was far from living in its purity and strength in the hearts of men, and bearing the expected fruit. Only his own conviction, his own faith was never shaken by this result. It must needs be, as Christ Himself had said, that offences must come; and, in the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 19), 'there must be also heresies,' and false teachers and deceivers must arise.

We have seen above how cordially Luther welcomed Agricola back at Wittenberg after throwing up his appointment at Eisleben. He obtained for him from the Elector in 1537 an ample salary, to enable him to fill the long-coveted office of teacher at the university, and be a preacher as well. It soon became known that Agricola persisted in maintaining that doctrine of repentance in defence of which he had attacked Melancthon at the first visitation of churches in the Saxon Electorate. He had been accused of this at Eisleben, and Count Albert of Mansfeld, whose service he had quitted with rudeness and discontent, denounced him as a restless and dangerous fellow. And now at Wittenberg also Agricola had some sermons printed, and some theses circulated, embodying a statement of his peculiar doctrine. Luther considered it his duty to refute these, and he did so from the pulpit, but without naming their author.

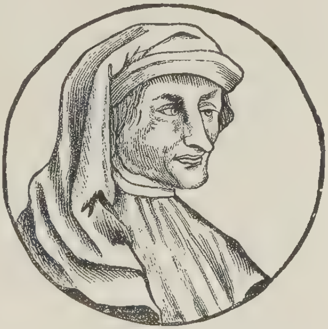

FIG. 44. -AGRICOLA. (From a miniature portrait by Cranach, in the University Album at Wittenberg, 1531.)

The proclamation of God's law, so Agricola now taught, was not necessary part of Christianity, as such, nor of the way of salvation prepared and revealed by Christ. The Gospel of the Son of God, our Saviour, this alone should be proclaimed, and operate in touching the hearts of men and exposing the true character of their sins as sinfulness against the Son of God. In this way he sought to give full effect to the fundamental evangelical doctrine, that the grace of God alone had power to save through the joyful message of Christ. The personal vanity, however, which was the chief weakness of this gifted, intellectual, and fairly eloquent man, and which was now increased by the dissatisfaction it had caused at Eisleben, displayed itself further in the assertion of his eccentricities of dogma. Moreover, he was far from clear in his first principles, and while maintaining his tenets he was unwilling to stake too much on his own account, and yet refused actually to abandon them.

He came at first to an understanding with Luther by offering an explanation which the latter deemed satisfactory, but he then proceeded to revert to his peculiar tenets in a new publication. Luther now launched a sharp reply against these antinomian theses, as well as against others, which went much further, and whose origin is unknown. He found wanting in Agricola that earnest moral appreciation of the law, and of the moral demands made of us by God, whereby the heart of the sinner, as he himself had experienced, must first be bruised and broken, and thus opened to receive the word of grace, before that word can truly renew, revive, and sanctify it. But together with Agricola's tenets he then placed the others, betraying an equally frivolous estimate of the real nature of those demands and of the duties they entailed, as evidence of one tendency and one character, since Agricola, indeed, taught like them, that the good willed by God in His Commandments was fulfilled in Christians by the simple fact of their belief in Christ, and as the fruit of His word of grace. Thus it came about that this tendency which Luther found represented in Agricola, stood out before him in all its compass and with its extremest and most alarming consequences, and called forth the boldest exercise of his zeal. It grieved him sorely, nevertheless, to have to enter into this dispute with his old friend. 'God knows,' he said, 'what trials this business has prepared for me; I shall have died of sheer anxiety before I have brought my theses against him (Agricola) to the light.'

At the instance, however, of the Elector, who valued Agricola, another reconciliation was brought about. Agricola humbled himself; he even authorised his great opponent to draw up a retractation in his name, and Luther did this in a manner very damaging to Agricola, in a letter to his former colleague and opponent at Eisleben, Caspar Güttel. Agricola thereupon received a place in the newly-formed consistory. But even now he could not refrain from fresh utterances which betrayed his old opinions. Luther's confidence in him was thus destroyed for ever: he spoke with indignation, pain, and scorn of 'Grikel (Agricola), the false man.' The latter at length complained to the Elector against Luther for having unjustly aspersed him. The Elector testified to him his displeasure; Luther gave a sharp answer to the charge, and his prince made further inquiries into the matter of complaint. Agricola finally snatched at a means of escape offered by his summons to Berlin, whither he had been called as a preacher of distinction by the Elector Joachim II., who was a convert to the Reformation. In August 1540 he left Wittenberg. He sent thither from Berlin another and fully satisfactory retractation in order to retain his official appointment. But Luther's friendship with him was broken for ever.

In another quarter also Melancthon had been charged with deviating in certain statements from the path of right doctrine.

We know already how his anxiety about the dangers caused by the separation from the great Catholic Church seemed to tempt him to indulge in questionable concessions, and how it was Luther himself, with a disposition so different to Melancthon's, who nevertheless held firmly to his trust in his friend and fellow-labourer, particularly during the Diet of Augsburg. And, indeed, subsequent events brought this tendency to concession more fully into notice.

Certain peculiarities now asserted themselves in Melancthon's independent opinions, with regard both to theology and practical life, which distinguished his mode of teaching from that of Luther. He who, again and again, in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, as also in the system of evangelical theology which in his 'Loci Communes' he was the first to elaborate, had expounded with full and active conviction the fundamental evangelical truth of a justifying and saving Faith, was anxious also—more so, even, than many strict confessors of that doctrine—to have the whole field of moral improvement and the fruits of morality which were necessary to preserve that faith, estimated at their proper value. And further, with respect to God's will and the operation of His grace, whereby alone the sinner could obtain inward conversion and faith, he wished to make this depend entirely on man's own will and choice, so that the blame might not appear to lie with God if the call to salvation remained fruitless, and a temptation thereby be offered to many to indulge in carelessness or despondency. In addition to this, he differed unmistakably from Luther in his doctrine of the Sacrament. For, though it was he who at Augsburg in 1530 had flatly rejected the Zwinglians, still his historical researches impressed him with the belief, that, in reality, as indeed the Zwinglians maintained, not Augustine himself, among the ancients, had taught the Real Bodily Presence after the manner of Luther, or even of Roman Catholicism; and his own theological opinion induced him at least to satisfy himself with more or less obscure propositions about the communion of the Saviour Who died for us with the guests at His table, without any fixed or clear declarations about the substantiality of the Body. This appears, for instance, in his 'Loci Communes,' although in the formula of the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 he went farther, together with Luther.

On the first point above-mentioned, a priest named Cordatus, a strict adherent of Luther, had raised a protest against him in 1536. But the opponent whom Melancthon chiefly feared in this respect was the theologian Amsdorf, who was not only an old familiar friend of Luther, but the especial guardian, both then and still more after Luther's death, of Lutheran orthodoxy. But Luther himself was anxious to avoid, even in this matter, any rupture or discord with Melancthon. He took great pains to reconcile the difference, and knew also how to keep silence, though without deviating from his own strict standpoint, or being able to overlook the peculiarity of his friend's teaching, conspicuously apparent as it was in the new edition of his book.

We are reminded by this, moreover, how Luther, during his illness at Schmalkald in 1537, made no secret of his fear of a division breaking out at Wittenberg after his death.

CHAPTER V.

LUTHER AND THE PROGRESS AND INTERNAL TROUBLES OF PROTESTANTISM. 1538–1541.

In the great affairs of the Church, amid the threats of his enemies and in all his dealings with them, Luther continued from day to day to trust quietly in God, as the Guider of events, Who suffers none to forestall His designs, and puts to shame and rebuke the inventions of man. His hope of external peace had hitherto been fulfilled beyond all expectation. And it had been permitted him to see the Reformation gain strength and make further progress in the German Empire. Indeed, it seemed possible that a union might be effected with those Catholics who had been impressed with the evangelical doctrine of salvation. These were results accomplished by the inward power of God's Word, as hitherto preached to the people, under a Divine and marvellously favourable dispensation of outer relations and events—fruits as unexpected as they were gratifying to Luther. Great plans or projects of his own, however, were still far from his thoughts; nor even did the details of this historical development demand such activity on his part as he had shown in the earlier years of the movement. And yet there was no lack of discord, difficulty, and trouble within the pale of the new Church and amongst its members; prospects of further, and possibly much more serious dangers to be encountered; thoughts of sadness and disquietude to vex the soul of the Reformer, now aged, suffering, and weary. The goal of his hopes had ever been, and still remained, not indeed a victory to be gradually achieved for his cause, perhaps even in his own lifetime, by the course of ecclesiastical and political changes and events, but the end which the Lord Himself, according to His promises, would make of the whole wicked world, and the Hereafter whither he was ever waiting to be summoned.

Since the Schmalkaldic allies had rejected the Emperor with his invitation to a Council, the Romish zealots might well hope that Charles at length would prepare to use force against them. He was not yet able to bring his quarrel with King Francis to a final termination; but, nevertheless, he concluded a truce with him in 1538 for ten years, while at the same time his vice-chancellor Held contrived to effect a union of Roman Catholic princes in Germany in opposition to the Schmalkaldic League. This union was joined, in addition to Austria, Bavaria, and George of Saxony, by Duke Henry of Brunswick, the bitter enemy of the Landgrave Philip. Already in the spring of that year people at Wittenberg talked of operations on a large scale ostensibly directed against the Turks, but in reality against the Protestants. Or at least it was feared that the imperial army, in the event of its defeating the Turks, might, as Luther expressed it, turn their spears against the Evangelical party. In this respect Luther had no fears; he did not believe in a victory over the Turks, and, even in that case, his opinion was that the imperial troops would no more submit to be made the instruments of such a policy than they had done some years before, after their victory at Vienna. Most earnestly he exhorted the Elector, for his part at least, to do his duty again in the war against the Turks, for the sake of his Fatherland and the poor oppressed people. On the other hand, the right of the Protestant States to resist the Emperor, if it came to a war of religion, was one which he now asserted without scruple or hesitation. The Emperor, he said, in such a war would not be Emperor at all, but merely a soldier of the Pope. He appealed to the fact that once among the people of Israel pious and godly men had risen up against their sovereign; and the German princes had additional rights over their Emperor, by virtue of their constitution. Finally, he reasoned from the law of nature itself, that a father was bound to protect his wife and children from open murder; and he likened the Emperor, who usurped a power notoriously illegal, to a murderer. For the rest, he declared, in a publication exhorting the Evangelical clergy to pray for peace, that as to whether the Papists chose to carry out their designs or not he was perfectly indifferent, in case God did not will to work a miracle. His only fear was lest a war might arise, if they did so, which would never end, and would be the total ruin of Germany.

But the Emperor was less zealous and more cautious than his vice-chancellor. He sent another representative to Germany, with instructions to prevent an outbreak of hostilities. This envoy, in the course of some negotiations conducted at Frankfort in April 1539, agreed to an understanding by which the ecclesiastical law-suits hitherto instituted in the Imperial Chamber against the Protestants were suspended, and a number of chosen theologians of piety and laymen were to 'arrange a praiseworthy union of Christians' at an assembly of the German Estates.

On April 17, in the midst of these transactions, Duke George of Saxony died after a short illness. His country passed to his brother Henry, who in his own smaller territory of Freiburg had for some years, much to the grief of George, established the Evangelical form of worship, and given shelter to the heretics banished by his brother. The latter had left no male issue to succeed him. He had lost two sons in boyhood; and his son John, who held the same opinions as himself, had died two years ago, when quite a young man, without leaving any children. His last remaining son Frederick was of weak intellect, but had nevertheless been married after his brother's death, and died a few weeks later. He was soon followed by his unhappy father and sovereign. Luther said of him that he had gone to everlasting fire, though he would have wished him life and conversion. To us his end appears the more tragic because we cannot but acknowledge the honest zeal with which, from his own point of view, he endeavoured to serve God, and would willingly even have effected a reform in the Church; whilst, in spite of all his severity against heretics, he never suffered himself to be hurried into deeds of coarse violence and cruelty. There are extant prayers and religious discourses, composed and written down by himself. He read the Bible, and expressed a wish, when Luther's translation appeared, that 'the monk would put the whole Bible into German, and then go about his business.'

Thus the old and constantly revived quarrel between Luther and the Duke came at length to an end. The Reformation was immediately introduced throughout the duchy by the appointment of Evangelical clergy, by changes in public worship, and by a visitation of churches after the example of the one in Electoral Saxony. When Henry was solemnly acknowledged sovereign at Leipzig, he invited Luther and Jonas to be present. On the afternoon of Whitsunday, May 24, 1539, Luther preached a sermon in the court chapel of that Castle of Pleissenburg, where he had once disputed before George with Eck, and on the following afternoon he preached in one of the churches of the town, not venturing to do so in the morning on account of his weak state of health. He now proclaimed aloud, in his sermon on the Gospel for Whitsunday, that the Church of Christ was not there, where men were madly crying 'Church! Church!' without the Word of God, nor was it with the Pope, the cardinals, and the bishops; but there, and there only, where Christ was loved and His Word was kept, and where accordingly He dwelt in the souls of men. He refrained from any special reference to the state of things hitherto existing at Leipzig and in the duchy, or to the change brought about by God. But we call to mind the words he had spoken in 1532, 'Who knows what God will do before ten years are over?' Very soon, indeed, the magnates of the Saxon court and the nobility, though accepting the reformed faith of their new sovereign, gave occasion to Luther for bitter complaints of their rapacity, their indifference to religion, and their improper and tyrannical usurpations on the territory of the Church.

In addition to the Saxon duchy, the Electorate of Brandenburg was also about to go over to Protestantism. The Elector Joachim I. adhered so strictly to the ancient Church, that his wife Elizabeth, who was evangelically inclined, had fled to Saxony, where she became an intimate friend of Luther's household. But on his death in 1535, his younger son John, together with his territory, the 'Neumark,' joined at once the Schmalkaldic allies. And now, after longer consideration, his elder brother also, Joachim II. —a man of quieter disposition and more attached to ancient ways—took the decisive step, after an agreement with his Estates and the territorial bishop, Jagow. On November 1, 1539, he received from the latter publicly the Sacrament in both kinds.

Under these circumstances the Emperor resolved to give effect to the essential part of the Frankfort agreement. He summoned a meeting at Spire 'for the purpose of so arranging matters that the wearisome dissension in religion might be reconciled in a Christian manner.' In consequence of a pestilence which appeared at Spire, the assembly was removed to Hagenau. Here it was actually held in June 1540.

Meanwhile, the most vigorous champion of Protestantism, the Landgrave Philip, took a step which was calculated to damage the position of the Evangelical Church and to embarrass its adherents more than anything which their enemies could possibly attempt. Philip, in his youth (1523) had taken to wife a daughter of Duke George of Saxony, but soon repented of his ill-considered resolve, on the ground that she was of an unamiable disposition and was afflicted with bodily infirmities, and accordingly proceeded to look elsewhere for a mistress, after the fashion only too common at that time with emperors and princes, but scarcely commented upon in their case. The earnest remonstrances made to him on religious grounds against this step had the effect of causing him certain prickings of conscience; he had not ventured on that account, as he now complained, to present himself at the Lord's table, with one single exception, since the Peasants' War. But his conscience was not strong enough to make him give up his evil ways. At last the Bible, which he read industriously, seemed to him to provide a means of outlet from his difficulty. He sheltered himself, as the Anabaptist fanatics had done before him, behind the Old Testament precedent of Abraham and other godly men, to whom it had been permitted to have more than one wife, and pleaded, moreover, that the New Testament contained no prohibition of polygamy. With all the energy and stubbornness of his nature, he fastened on these notions and clung to them, when, at the house of his sister, the Duchess Elizabeth, at Rochlitz, he chanced to meet and fall in love with a lady named Margaret von der Saal. She refused to be his except by marriage. Her mother even demanded of him that Luther, Butzer, and Melancthon, or at least two of them, together with an envoy of the Elector and the Duke of Saxony, should be present as witnesses at the marriage. Philip himself found the consent of these divines and of his most distinguished ally, John Frederick, indispensable. He succeeded first of all in gaining over the versatile Butzer, and sent him in December 1539, on this errand, to Wittenberg.

He appealed to the strait that he was in, no longer able with a good conscience to go to war or to punish crime, and also to the testimony of Scripture, adding, very truly, that the Emperor and the world were quite willing to permit both him and anyone else to live in open immorality. Thus, he said, they were forbidding what God allowed, and winking at what He prohibited. In other respects, indeed, a double marriage was not a thing unheard of even by the Christendom of those days. It was said, for instance, of the Christian Emperor of Rome, Valentinian II., to whose case Philip himself appealed, that he had been permitted to contract a marriage of that kind. To the Pope was ascribed the power to grant the necessary dispensation.

On December 10 Butzer brought back to the Landgrave from Wittenberg an opinion of Luther and Melancthon. They told him in decided terms that it was in accordance with creation itself, and recognised as such by Jesus, 'that a man was not to have more than one wife;' and they, the preachers of God's Word, were commanded to regulate marriage and all human things 'in accordance with their original and Divine institution, and to adhere thereto as closely as possible, while at the same time avoiding to their utmost all cause of pain or annoyance.' They urgently exhorted him not to regard incontinence, as did the world, in the light of a trifling offence, and represented to him plainly that if he refused to resist his evil inclinations, he would not mend matters by taking a second wife. But with all this exhortation and warning, they confessed themselves bound to admit that 'what was allowed in respect of marriage by the law of Moses was not actually forbidden in the gospel;' thereby maintaining, in point of fact, that an original ordinance in the Church must be adhered to as the rule, but nevertheless admitting the possibility of a dispensation under very strong and exceptional circumstances. They did not say that such a dispensation was applicable to the case of Philip; they only wished him earnestly to reconsider the matter with his own conscience. In the event, however, of his keeping to his resolve, they would not refuse him the benefit of a dispensation and only required that the matter should be kept private, on account of the scandal and possible abuse it would occasion if generally known.

Luther himself abandoned afterwards the conclusions he drew from the Old Testament in this respect, and, as a consequence, rejected the admissibility of a double marriage for Christians. Friends of the evangelical and Lutheran belief can only lament the decision he pronounced in this matter. With that belief itself it has nothing whatever to do. Instead of drawing his conclusions from the moral aspect of marriage, as amply attested by the spirit of the New Testament, though not indeed exactly expressed, Luther on this occasion clung to the letter, and failed, of course, to find any written declaration on the point. At the same time he mistook, in common with all the theologians of his time, the difference, in point of matured morality and knowledge, between the New Covenant and the standpoint of the Old, which was that also of his best adherents.

The simple Christian common sense of the Elector John Frederick, and his practical view of the position, preserved him this time from the error into which the theologians had fallen. He lamented that they should have given an answer, and would have nothing to do with the business.

Philip, however, rejoiced at the decision, and obtained, moreover, his wife's consent to take a second one.

In the following March the Protestants held another conference at Schmalkald, with a view of coming to an agreement as to their conduct in the attempts at unity in the Church. The Elector summoned Melancthon thither, but excused Luther, at his own request. Philip then invited the former, under some pretext or other, to the neighbouring Castle of Rothenburg on the Fulda. Arrived there, he was obliged to be a witness with Butzer, on March 4, 1540, to the marriage of the Landgrave with Margaret. Philip thanked Luther some weeks after for the 'remedy' allowed him, without which he should have become 'quite desperate.' He had kept the name of his second wife a secret from the Wittenbergers; he now told Luther that she was a virtuous maiden, a relative of Luther's own wife, and that he rejoiced to have honourably become his kinsman.

Very soon, however, the news of this unheard of event got wind. The Evangelicals were not less scandalised than their enemies, who in other respects were glad to see the mischief. The first to demand an explanation was the Ducal Court of Saxony, the Duke being so nearly related to Philip's first wife, and on the eve of a quarrel with Philip about a claim of inheritance. The Landgrave's whole position was in jeopardy; for bigamy, by the law of the Empire, was a serious offence. Luther heard now with indignation that the 'necessity' to which Philip had thought himself justified in yielding had been exaggerated. The latter, on the other hand, finding concealment no longer possible, wished to announce his marriage publicly, and defend it. He went so far as to imagine that even if the allies should renounce him he might still procure the favour and consideration of the Emperor. Unpleasant and very painful discussions arose between him, John Frederick, and Duke Henry of Saxony.

Meanwhile, the day was now approaching for the conference at Hagenau. Melancthon was sent there too by the Elector. But on reaching Weimar on June 13, where the prince was then staying, he suddenly fell ill, and it seemed as if his end was close at hand. He was oppressed with trouble and anxiety about the wrongdoing of the Landgrave. The Elector himself wrote reproachfully to Philip, saying that 'Philip Melancthon was disturbed with miserable thoughts about him,' and he now lay between life and death. Luther was sent for by the Elector from Wittenberg. He found the sick man lying in a state of unconsciousness and seemingly quite dead to the world. Shocked at the sight, he exclaimed, 'God help us! how has Satan marred this vessel of Thy grace!' Then the faithful, manly friend fell to praying God for his precious companion, casting, as he said, all his heart's request before Him, and reminding Him of all the promises contained in His own Word. He exhorted and bade Melancthon to be of good courage, for that God willed not the death of a sinner, and he would yet live to serve Him. He assured him he would rather now depart himself. On Melancthon's gradually showing more signs of life, he had some food prepared for him, and on his refusing it said, 'You really must eat, or I will excommunicate you.' By degrees the patient revived in body and soul. Luther was able to inform another friend, 'We found him dead, and by an evident miracle he lives.'

Luther, after this, was taken to Eisenach by his prince, to advise him on the news which he expected to receive there from Hagenau. At Eisenach he and the chancellor Brück had an earnest consultation with envoys from Hesse. Against these, both Luther and Brück insisted that the proceedings which had taken place between Philip and the theologians in respect to his marriage should be kept as secret as a confession, and that Philip must be content to have his second marriage regarded, in the eyes of the world and according to the law, as concubinage. He must make up his mind, therefore, to parry, as best he could, the questions which were being noised abroad about him, with vague statements or equivocations. He would then incur no further personal danger. But any attempt to brazen it out would inevitably land him in confusion and embarrassment, and only increase and continue the damage done to the Evangelical cause by this affair.

The Diet at Hagenau made no further demand on Luther's activity. It was there resolved to take in hand again, at another meeting to be held at Worms late in the autumn, and after further preparation, the religious and ecclesiastical questions at issue. Peaceably-disposed and competent men were to be appointed on both sides for this purpose. Thus Luther was now at liberty to leave Eisenach towards the end of July, and return home, dissatisfied, as he wrote to his wife, with the Diet at Hagenau, where labour and expense had been wasted, but happy in the thought that Melancthon had been restored from death to life.

At Worms the proceedings, in which Melancthon and Eck took a prominent part, were further adjourned to a Diet which the Emperor purposed to hold in person at Ratisbon early in 1541. Here, on April 27, a debate was opened on religion.

Luther entertained very slender expectations from all these conferences, considering the long-ascertained opinions of his opponents. He pointed to the innocent blood which had long stained the hands of the Emperor Charles and King Ferdinand. Still, during the Diet at Worms, the thought arose in his mind that, if only the Emperor were rightly disposed, a German Council might actually result from that assembly. He saw his enemies busy with their secret schemes of mischief, and feared lest many of his comrades in the faith, such as the Landgrave Philip, might treat too lightly the matter, which was no mere comedy among men, but a tragedy in which God and Satan were the actors. He rejoiced again, however, that the falsehood and cunning of his enemies must be brought to nought by their own folly, and that God Himself would consummate the great catastrophe of the drama. And in regard to the fear we have just mentioned, he declared that he, at any rate, would not suffer himself to be dragged into anything against his own conviction. 'Rather,' said he, 'would I take the matter again on my own shoulders, and stand alone, as at the beginning. We know that it is the cause of God, and He will carry it through to the end; whoever will not go with it, must remain behind.'

Between the Diets of Worms and Ratisbon he entered in 1541, with all his old severity, and with a violence even beyond his wont, into a bitter correspondence which had just then begun between Duke Henry of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, a zealous Catholic, and morally of ill repute with friend and foe, on the one side, and John Frederick and the Landgrave Philip, the heads of the Schmalkaldic League, on the other. He published against Duke Henry a pamphlet 'Against Hans Worst.' The Duke had taunted him with having allowed himself to call his own sovereign Hans Wurst. Luther assured him, in reply, that he had never given this name to a single man, whether friend or foe; but now applied it to the Duke, because he found it meant a stupid blockhead who wished to be thought clever and all the time spoke and acted like a simpleton. But he was not content with calling him a blockhead; he represented him as a profligate man, who, while libelling the princes and pretending to be the champion of God's ordinances, himself practised open adultery, committed acts of violence and insolent tyranny, and incited men to incendiarism in his opponents' territories. He would let the Duke scream himself hoarse or dead with his calumnies against John Frederick and the Evangelicals, and simply answer him by saying, 'Devil, thou liest! Hans Worst, how thou liest! O, Henry Wolfenbüttel, what a shameless liar thou art! Thou spittest forth much, and namest nothing; thou libellest, and provest nothing.' At the same time this pamphlet of Luther was a literary vindication of the Reformation and Protestantism; here, said he, and not in the popedom, was the true, ancient, and original Christian Church. Luther himself, on reading over his pamphlet after it was printed, thought its tone against Henry was too mild; a headache, he said, must have suppressed his indignation.

Just at this time he had to encounter a fresh and violent attack of illness. He described it, in a letter to

Melancthon, who was then at Ratisbon, as a 'cold in the head;' it was accompanied not only with alarming giddiness, from which he was now a frequent sufferer, but also with deafness and intolerable pains, forcing tears from his eyes, something unusual with him, and making him call on God to put an end to his pain or to his life. A copious discharge of matter from his ear, which occurred in Passion Week, gave him relief; but for a long while he continued very weak and suffering. To his prince, who sent his private physician to attend him, he wrote on April 25, thanking him, and adding, 'I should have been well content if the dear Lord Jesus had taken me in His mercy from hence, as I am now of little more use on earth.' He attributed his recovery to the intercessions which Bugenhagen had made for him in the Church.

Whilst he was still feeling his head thus full of pain and unfit for work, he was called upon to give his opinion on the preparations for the religious conference at Ratisbon, and afterwards upon its results.

Bright prospects seemed now to be opening for the victory of the Gospel. Men of understanding and really desirous of peace had for once been commissioned, by the Catholics as well as by the Protestants, to conduct the debate. The chief actors were no longer an Eck, though he, too, was one of the collocutors, but the pious, gentle, and refined theologian Julius von Pflug, and the electoral counsellor of Cologne, Gropper, who vied with him in an earnest desire for reform and unity. Contarini also was there, as the Papal legate—a man influenced by purely religious motives, and a convert to the deeper Evangelical doctrine of salvation. Melancthon and Butzer were also there. The questions of most importance from the Evangelical point of view were first dealt with—namely, those which related, not to the external system and authority of the Church, but to man's need of, and the way to obtain, salvation, to sin, grace, and justification. And it was now unanimously confessed that the faithful soul is sustained solely by the righteousness given by Christ; and for His sake alone, and not for any worthiness or works of its own, is justified and accepted by God.

Never before, and never since, have Protestant and Catholic theologians approached each other so nearly, nay, been so unanimous, on these fundamental doctrines, as on that memorable day. And the Catholics, in this, distinctly left the ground of mediæval scholasticism, and went over to that of the Evangelicals. How distinctly this was done will be apparent to any one who compares the propositions accepted at the Conference of Ratisbon with the Catholic reply to the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

Nevertheless, we do not find that Luther felt particularly elated by the news from Ratisbon. The formula which embodied their agreement seemed to him a 'roundabout and patched affair.' In connection with faith, as the only means of justification, too much, he thought, was said of the works which must spring from it; in connection with the justification given to the faithful through Christ, too much was said of the righteousness which each Christian must strive to attain. He, too, had always taught and demanded both works and righteousness. But the present arrangement of clauses seemed to him calculated to lessen and obscure again the primary importance of Christ and of Faith, as the sole means of salvation. And we see what objection was uppermost in his mind, in his allusion to Eck, who also was obliged to subscribe the formula. Eck, said Luther, would never confess to having once taught differently to now, and would know well enough how to adopt the new tenets to his old way of thinking. They were putting a patch of new cloth upon an old garment, and the rent would be made worse. (Matt. ix. 16.)

Luther was spared, however, a decision as to the acceptance or non-acceptance of an agreement. For among the Catholic Estates of the Empire he found, so far as he had followed the debate of the Diet, too strong an opposition to hope for real union. Moreover, the collocutors themselves were unable to agree when they came to further questions, as, for example, the Mass and Transubstantiation; they still shipwrecked, therefore, on those points which were of the most vital importance for the external glorification of the priesthood and the Church, and the surrender of which would have meant the sacrifice of a dogma already ratified by a Conciliar decree.

On June 11 an embassy from Ratisbon appeared before Luther in the name of those Protestant states which were most zealous for unity. Prince John of Anhalt was at their head. Luther was requested to declare his concurrence with what had been done, and assist them in giving permanent effect to the articles agreed to at the Conference, and arranging some peaceful and tolerant compromise with regard to those points on which agreement had been impossible. Luther was quite prepared to acquiesce in such toleration, provided only the Emperor would permit the preaching of the articles referring to the doctrine of salvation, leaving it open to the Protestants to continue their warfare of the Word on the points still remaining in dispute. The Emperor, however, would only sanction those articles on the understanding that a Council should finally decide upon them, and that, in the meantime, all controversial writings on matters of religion should cease. By the Catholic Estates at the Diet they were strenuously opposed. Luther's own opinion remained substantially the same as before—namely, that any trust or hopes were vain, unless their enemies gave God the honour due to Him, and openly confessed that they had changed their teaching. The Emperor must see and acknowledge that within the last twenty years his Edict had been the murder of many pious people.

The Conference accordingly remained fruitless. The Diet, however, did not close without achieving an important result for the Protestants; for the Emperor granted them, at their request, the Religious Peace of Nüremberg.

The main reason that induced Charles so far to toleration and leniency was the trouble with the Turks. With regard to these, Luther now addressed himself once more to his countrymen with words of earnestness and weight. He published an 'Exhortation to prayer against the Turks,' teaching and warning his readers to regard them as a scourge of God, and make war against them as God commanded. From this time also dates his hymn

> Lord, shield us with Thy Word, our Hope,
> And smite the Moslem and the Pope.

When a tax was levied for the war with the Turks, Luther himself begged the Elector not to exempt him with his scanty goods. He would gladly, he said, if not too old and too infirm, 'be one of the army himself.' In 1542 he brought out for his countrymen a refutation of the Koran, written in earlier days, that they might learn what a shameful faith was Mahomed's, and not suffer themselves to be perverted, in case by God's decree they should see the Turks victorious, or even fall into their hands.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS AND INTERNAL TROUBLES OF PROTESTANTISM.

1541–44.

THE Reformation, against which the Emperor had so repeatedly to promise his interference, and with which he was compelled to seek for a peaceful understanding, continued meanwhile to gain ground in various parts of Germany.

Luther hailed with especial joy its victory in the town of Halle, which had formerly been a favourite seat of the Cardinal Albert and the chief scene of his wanton extravagances, and where now one of Luther's most intimate and most learned friends from Wittenberg, Justus Jonas, was installed as reformer and Evangelical pastor. Here the final impetus was given to the movement, among the mass of the population, of whom the large majority had long espoused the cause of Luther, by those money difficulties which played such a serious and grievous part in the life of Albert. When, in the spring of 1541, the town was called on to pay taxes to the amount of 22,000 gulden, to defray the Cardinal's debts, the citizens made the payment conditional on their Council appointing an Evangelical preacher. Jonas was accordingly invited to the town, and received at once, on his arrival, a regular appointment through the magistracy and a committee of the congregation. In Passion Week, when Luther was recovering from his illness and Albert had to attend the Diet at Ratisbon, Jonas for the first time took his place in the principal church in the town, then recently rebuilt, in the pulpit which the Archbishop had had erected with elaborate carvings in stone. Soon after the two other churches in the town received Evangelical preachers. The general regulation of Church matters was entrusted to Jonas, and remained under his control. Luther, however, supported his friend with his advice, and continued on terms of trusted intimacy with him till his death. He did not conceal his joy that the 'wicked old rogue,' Albert, should have had to live to see this, and praised God for upholding His judgment upon earth. The collection of countless and wonderful relics with which the Cardinal, twenty years before, had sought to carry on the traffic in indulgences, so hateful to Luther, he now wished to exhibit in like manner at Mayence, his town of residence. Thereupon Luther, in 1542, published anonymously, but with the evident intention of being recognised as its author, a 'New Paper from the Rhine,' which announced to German

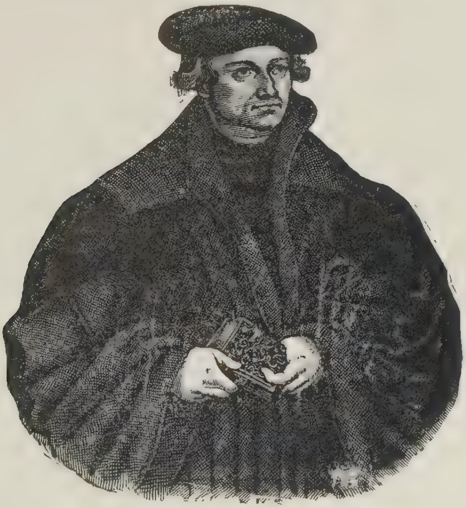

Fig. 45.—Jonas. (From a portrait by Cranach, in his Album at Berlin, 1543.)

Christendom a series of new, unheard-of relics, collected by his Highness the Elector, such as a piece of the left horn of Moses, three tongues of flame from his burning bush, &c., and lastly a whole drachm of his own true heart and half an ounce of his own truthful tongue, which his Highness had added as a legacy by his last will and testament. The Pope, said Luther, had promised to anyone who should give a gulden in honour of the relics, a remission for ten years of whatever sins he pleased. Contempt of this kind was all that Luther found the exhibition deserved. Albert remained silent.

About the same time the Elector John Frederick undertook a novel. important, though a dangerous, and to Luther an objectionable step, in connection with a bishopric then vacant. The Bishop of Naumburg had died. The Chapter of the Cathedral, with whom lay the election of his successor, were accustomed to guide their choice by the wish of the Elector, as their territorial sovereign. They now elected, without waiting to hear from John Frederick, who had seceded from Catholicism, the distinguished Julius von Pflug. The Elector, on the contrary, was anxious, as his privilege was hurt by this neglect, to nominate a bishop of his own choice, and, moreover, a member of the Augsburg Confession. His Chancellor, Brück, protested earnestly against this step, and Luther could not refrain from endorsing his remonstrance. If the common herd of Papists, he said, had been content to look on and see what had been done to priests and monks, they and the Emperor would not care to see the same things done with the Episcopate. The Elector thought this pusillanimous; he wished to be bolder and more spirited than Luther. It was a pity only that his pious zeal lacked the more circumspect judgment of his advisers, and that the interests of his own authority were also concerned. He declined even to accept the advice of the Wittenberg theologians, who suggested that, at all events, the bishopric should be given to the eminent prince of the Empire, George of Anhalt, but chose Nicholas von Amsdorf—a man of better promise, not, indeed, solely from his theological principles, but as being likely to be more dependent on his territorial sovereign, though perhaps, as an unmarried man and a member of the nobility, less repugnant than any other Protestant theologian to the Catholics. On January 18, 1542, the Elector brought him in solemn state to Naumburg before the chapter there assembled.

Luther was glad, nevertheless, to see an Evangelical bishop. He took care to introduce him in Evangelical manner. According to the Catholic doctrine, as is well known, the Episcopate is transmitted from the Apostles by the act of consecration, with the laying on of hands and anointing, which can only be done by one bishop to another, and only a bishop can then consecrate priests or the clergy. The Reformers would easily have been able to continue this so-called Apostolical succession through the Prussian bishops who went over to them. But, as they never acknowledged the necessity of this with regard to the inferior clergy, neither did they with regard to the new bishop. Luther himself consecrated Amsdorf on January 20, together with two Evangelical superintendents of the neighbourhood, and the principal pastor and superintendent of the Evangelical congregation at Naumburg, with prayer and the laying on of hands, in the presence of the various orders and a multitude of people from the town and district assembled in the Cathedral. The congregation were first informed that an honest, upright bishop had now been nominated for them by their sovereign and his estates in concert with the clergy, and they were called upon to express their own approval by an Amen, which was thereupon given loudly in response. In this manner at least it was sought to comply with a rule especially enjoined by Cyprian: namely, that a bishop should be elected in an assembly of neighbouring bishops and with the consent of his own congregation. Luther gave an account of the ceremony in a tract, entitled 'Example of the way to consecrate a true Christian bishop.'

Brück's apprehensions meantime were only too well founded. The complaints raised against this consecration weighed heavily with even the more moderate opponents of the Reformation, and especially with the Emperor. It was at the same time very evident that, as we have elsewhere observed, the Elector, good Churchman as he was by disposition, frequently displayed too little energy in regard to the general relations and interests of his Church. Thus the arrangements required for the bishopric remained neglected, and

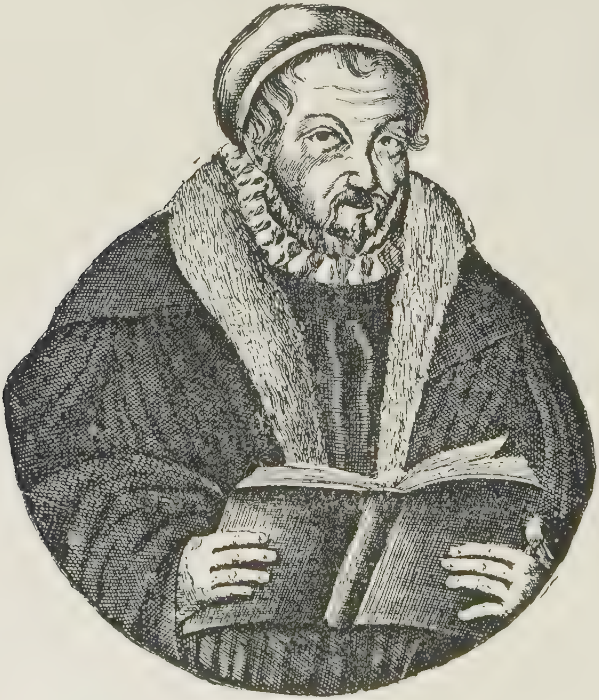

FIG. 46.—AMSDORF. (From an old woodcut.)

the new bishop was furnished with a most inadequate maintenance. Luther complained that the Electoral Court undertook great things, and then left them sticking in the mire. Moreover, among many of the temporal lords, even on the Protestant side, there were signs of spiteful jealousy and suspicion against the honours and advantages enjoyed by their theologians. Luther himself proceeded therefore with the utmost possible caution. He even declined once a present of venison from his friend Amsdorf, in order not to give occasion for calumny by the 'Centaurs at Court;' though, as he said, they themselves had devoured everything, without any prickings of conscience. 'Let them,' he wrote to Amsdorf, 'guzzle in God's name or in any other.'

Scarcely had the Elector's instalment of the bishop (1542) awakened these bitter feelings of resentment, when a war threatened to break out between the Elector and his cousin and fellow-Protestant, Duke Maurice of Saxony, the successor of his late father Henry—a war which would have imperilled more than anything else the position of the Protestants in the Empire, and which stirred and disquieted Luther to his inmost soul.

Between the ducal, or Albertine, and the Electoral, or Ernestine lines of the princely house of Saxony, various rights were in dispute, and among them, in particular, those of supreme jurisdiction over the little town of Wurzen, belonging to the bishopric of Meissen. When now the Bishop of Meissen refused to let the subsidy, levied at Wurzen for the war against the Turks, be forwarded to the Elector, the latter, in March 1542, quickly sent thither his troops. Maurice at once called out his own troops against him. Both continued to arm, and prepared to fight. Luther thereupon, in a letter of April 7, intended for publication, appealed to them and their Estates in terms of heartfelt Christian fervour and perfect frankness. He reminded them of the Scriptural admonition to keep peace;

of the close relationship of the two princes as the sons of two sisters; of their noble birth; of their subjects, the burghers and peasants, who were so closely intermingled by marriage that the war would be no war, but a mere family brawl; furthermore, of the petty ground of their fierce contention, just as if two drunken rustics were fighting in a tavern about a glass of beer, or two idiots about a bit of bread; of the shame and scandal for the Gospel; and of the triumph of their enemies and the devil, who would rejoice to see this little spark kindle into a conflagration. If either of the two, instead of using force, would declare himself content with what was just and right, whether it were his own Elector or the Duke, Luther for his part would assist him with his prayers, and he might then trust himself with confidence against aggression, and leave spear and musket to the children of discontent. He told the others that they had incurred the ban and the vengeance of God; nay, he advised all who had to fight under such an unpeaceful prince to run from the field as fast as they could.

The Landgrave Philip, who had hitherto, on account of his second marriage, continued somewhat on strained terms with John Frederick, brought about at this critical moment a peaceful understanding between him and Maurice. The young duke, however, burned with an ambition which longed to satisfy itself, even at the expense of his cousin and other Protestant princes, and his power, moreover, was far superior to the Elector's. Luther augured evil for the future.

The Reformation was now accepted in the territory also of Duke Henry of Brunswick. The Landgrave Philip and John Frederick had taken the field together against him, on account of his having attacked the Evangelical town of Goslar and sought defiantly to execute against it a sentence, in connection with ecclesiastical matters, which had threatened it from the Imperial Chamber, but was suspended by the Emperor. This war against 'Henry the Incendiary' Luther considered just and necessary, the question being one of protecting the oppressed. Wolfenbüttel, whose fortress the Duke boasted to be impregnable, speedily succumbed on August 13, 1542, to the fate of war and the boldness of Philip. Luther saw with triumph how the fortress which, it was reputed, could stand a six years' siege, had fallen in three days by the help of God. He hoped only that the conquerors would be humble and give the glory of the exploit to God. They then occupied the land, the prince of which fled, and proceeded to establish the Evangelical Church, in accordance with the general wish of the population.

Maurice of Saxony, who still strenuously adhered to the Evangelical confession and to his rights as protector of the Church, not only continued the reformation commenced in the Duchy by his father, but succeeded in extending it peacefully to the bishopric of Merseburg. The chapter there decided, in 1544, on his nomination, to elect to the vacant see his young brother Augustus, who, not being himself an ecclesiastic, delegated at once his episcopal functions to George of Anhalt, Luther's pious-minded friend. Luther in the summer of the following year consecrated him, in the same manner as Amsdorf, together with several superintendents, and with Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and Jonas.

Events far greater and more important were occurring in the archbishopric of Cologne. Here an Archbishop at once and Elector, the aged, worthy Hermann of Wied, had resolved, from his own free conviction, to undertake a reformation on the basis of the Gospel. In 1543 he invited Melancthon for this purpose from Wittenberg. Melancthon's fellow-labourer was Butzer, who had the reputation of always allowing himself to be carried too far by his zeal for general unity in the Church, and at the same time, in regard to the doctrine of the Sacrament, even as accepted by the Wittenberg Concord, of preferring a more vague conception of his own. Luther, however, promoted the undertaking with thanks to God, himself furthered Melancthon's going, assured him of his entire confidence, and learned from him with joy of the Archbishop's uprightness, penetration, and constancy. In like manner, the Bishop of Münster also began to attempt a reformation, in conformity with the wishes of his Estates.

The Emperor at length, who since 1542 had been again at war with France, and who needed therefore all the assistance that his German Estates could give him, displayed at a new Diet at Spires, in 1544, more gracious consideration to the Protestants than he had ever done before. In the Imperial Recess he promised not only to endeavour to bring about a general Council, to be assembled in Germany, but undertook, since the meeting of such a Council was still uncertain, to convoke another Diet, which should itself deal with the religion in dispute. In the meantime, he and the various Estates of the Empire would consider and prepare a scheme for Christian unity and a general Christian reformation. The Archbishop Albert, now wholly embittered against the Reformation, had issued a warning, after the Diet of 1541, against any agreement to hold a Council on German soil, as the Protestant poison would here have too powerful an influence; in a national German Council he foresaw the threatening danger of a schism. The resolutions passed at Spires brought down severe reproaches from the Pope against the Emperor. What particularly scandalised his Christian Holiness was that laymen- aye, laymen, who supported the condemned heretics--were to sit as judges in matters concerning the Church and the priesthood.

Protestantism, both in its extent and power, had now reached a point of progress in the German Empire which seemed to offer a possibility of its becoming the religion of the great majority of the nation, and even of this majority being united. Charles V., nevertheless, kept his eyes steadily fixed on his original goal—nay, he probably felt himself nearer to it than ever. By his concessions he obtained an army, which enabled him in the September of that year to conclude a durable peace with King Francis, stipulating, as before, but secretly, for mutual co-operation for the restoration of Catholic unity in the Church. The next thing to be done was to persuade the Pope at length to convene a Council, which should serve this object in the sense intended by the Emperor, and then to enforce by its authority the final subjection of the Protestants.

This possibility of a final triumph of Protestantism might have been counted on with hope, if only that breath of the Spirit which had once been stirred by the Reformer and had already responded to his efforts had remained in full force and vigour in the hearts of the German people; and if the new Spirit, thus awakened, had really penetrated the masses, or, at least, the influential classes and high personages who espoused the new faith, and had purified and strengthened them to fight, to work, and to suffer. But Luther complained from the very first, and more and more as time went on, how sadly this Spirit was wanting to assist him in proclaiming the Gospel and combating the anti-Christian system of Rome. Thus he again complained, when hearing of what had happened at Cologne, at Münster, and at Brunswick, that 'much evil and little good happens to us;' he adapted to his own Church community the proverb, 'The nearer Rome, the worse the Christian,' as well as the words of the prophets, lamenting the iniquity of Jerusalem, the holy city. In his zeal he reproached the Evangelical congregations even more severely than his Catholic and Popish opponents would ever have ventured to reproach them, inasmuch as their own moral position, to say the least, was not a whit better. But against the former, his own brethren, Luther had to complain of base ingratitude to God for the signal benefits He had vouchsafed them. Thus the peasantry, in particular, he taxed again and again with their old selfish and obstinate indifference and stupidity; the burghers with their luxury and service of Mammon; and his fellow-countrymen in general with their gluttony and their coarse and carnal appetites. It pained him most to see these sins prevail among his nearest fellow-townsmen and followers, his Wittenbergers; and he lashed out with all his force against the students whom, as a class, he saw addicted to unchastity and to 'swinish vices,' as he called them. The authorities, in his opinion, were far too unmindful of their high appointment by God, of which he had taken such pains to assure them. When Church discipline came to be really introduced and made more stringent, he foresaw quite well that it would only touch the peasants, and not reach the upper classes. Among the great nobles at Court, especially at Dresden, but also at that of the Elector, he found 'violent Centaurs and greedy Harpies,' who preyed upon the Reformation and disgraced it, and in whose midst it was difficult—nay, impossible—even for an honest, right-minded ruler to govern as a true Christian. He had already, and especially in these latter years, been in conflict with lawyers, including some of well-recognised conscientiousness, such as his colleague and friend Schurf, about many questions in which they declared themselves unable to deviate from theories of the canon or even the Roman law, which he considered unchristian and immoral. He declared it, for example, to be an insult to the law of God that they should insist so strongly on the obligation of vows of marriage, made by young people in secret and against their parents' will. So far from anticipating the triumph of the Evangelical religion, while such was the condition of Germans and German Protestants, he predicted with anxiety heavy punishment for his country, and declared that God would assuredly cause the confessors of the Gospel to be purged and sifted by calamity.

Just at that time, when a decisive moment was approaching for the great ecclesiastical contest in Germany, Luther felt himself constrained to rend asunder once more the bond of peace and mutual toleration which had been established with such trouble between himself and the Swiss Evangelicals. In doing so, he had seen no reason either to change or conceal his old opinion about Zwingli. The Swiss, on the other hand, offended by Luther's utterances, took, in a manner, their honoured teacher and reformer under their protection; from which Luther concluded that they still clung to all his errors. A lurking distrust of Luther had never been wholly dispelled among them. Luther heard, moreover, of corrupting influences still exercised by the Sacramentarians outside Switzerland. A letter reached him to that effect from some of his adherents at Venice, whose complaints of the mischievous results of the Sacramental controversy among their fellow-worshippers ascribed that controversy to the continued influence of Zwinglianism. In August 1543 he wrote to the Zurich printer Froschauer, who had presented him with a translation of the Bible made by the preacher of that town, saying briefly and frankly that he could have no fellowship with them, and that he had no desire to share the blame of their pernicious doctrine; he was sorry 'that they should have laboured in vain, and should after all be lost.' Even in a scheme of reformation which Butzer, with Melancthon, had prepared for Cologne, he now discovered some suspicious articles about the Sacrament, to which a criticism of Amsdorf had drawn his notice; they passed over, it appeared, Luther's declaration, already agreed on, about the substantial presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament, or merely 'mumbled it,' as was Luther's expression. Nay, he heard it said that even Wittenberg and himself would not adhere to his doctrine on this point. Occasion, indeed, was given for this remark by the circumstance that the ancient usage of the Elevation of the Host, which, though connected with the Catholic idea of sacrifice, had nevertheless been hitherto retained, though interpreted in another sense, was now at length abolished at Wittenberg.

After much anger and discontent, Luther broke out, in September 1544, with the tract, 'Short Confession of the Holy Sacrament.' He had nothing to do with any new refutation of false teachers these, he said, had already been frequently convicted by him as open blasphemers—but simply to testify once more against the 'fanatics and enemies of the Sacrament, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Schwenkfeld, and their disciples,' and once and for all to renounce all fellowship with these lost souls.

Alarming reports were spread about attacks being also meditated by Luther against Butzer and Melancthon. Melancthon himself trembled; he seriously feared he should be compelled to retire into exile. But not a word did Luther say against Butzer, beyond calling him, as he did now, a chatterbox. Against Melancthon we find nowhere, not even in Luther's letters to his intimate friends, a single harsh or menacing expression from his lips. He maintained his confidence in him, even in respect to the later proceedings in the Church. When urged to publish a collection of his Latin writings, he long refused to do so, as he says in the preface to his edition of 1545, because there were already such excellent works on Christian doctrine, such as, in particular, the 'Loci Communes' of Melancthon, which its author had recently revised. It must be regretted that Melancthon, at moments like these, which must have caused him pain, did not open his heart with more freedom and courage to the friend whose heart still beat with such warm and unchanging affection for himself.

Luther never, till the day of his death, bestowed much care or calculation on the immediate consequences of his acts and of the work to which he felt himself called and urged by God, and which certainly brought out in strong relief the individuality of his nature. While committing, as he did, the cause to God alone, he kept steadily in view the ultimate goal to which God was surely guiding it—nay, that goal was immediately before his eyes. His confident belief in the near approach of the last day, when the Lord would solve all these earthly doubts and difficulties, and manifest Himself in the perfect glory and bliss of His kingdom, remained in him unaltered from the beginning of his struggle to the end of his labours. We recognise in this belief the intensity of his own longings, wrestlings, and strivings for this end, as also the sincerity of his own conviction, little as the days of which we are now speaking, so busy with events of every kind, corresponded with the time ordained by God. Luther stretched out his view and aspirations beyond this world, all the time that he was teaching Christians again how to honour the world in the moral duties assigned to them, and to enjoy its blessings and benefits with thankfulness to God. 'No man knoweth the day or the hour'—of this he constantly reminded them, and warned them against idle speculations. But his hopes, nevertheless, he still rested on the nearness of the end. These hopes he expressed with peculiar assurance in a small Latin tract, written during these later years of his life, in which he treats of Biblical chronology, and further of the epochal years in the history of the world. In referring, for example, to the wide-spread theory, originating with the Jews, of a great Week of six thousand years, to be followed by the final and everlasting Day of Rest, he sought with much ingenuity of reasoning to prove that of those six thousand years probably only half would be accomplished. Since now, according to his chronology, the year 1,540 was the 5,500th year of the world, the end was bound to be at hand—nay, was already overdue—when his little book appeared in 1541. Yet, whatever were his views on this point, he never, like so many others, allowed himself to be drawn by such hopes and desires into illusions dangerous in practice.

This year passed by without any further or greater literary labour on his part.

In addition to this continued polemic against the popedom and false teachers, we must not omit to mention some characteristic controversial writings, provoked from him by his indignation at the attacks on Christianity by Jews, nay, by their seduction of many Christians. As early as 1538, a strange rumour of a 'Jewish rabble' in Moravia—a country rich in sectaries—having induced Christians to accept the Mosaic law, had called forth from him a public 'Letter against the Sabbathers.' He launched out with vehemence against them in 1543 in some further tracts, inveighing mainly against the dirty insults and savage blasphemies which the brazen-faced Jews dared to employ towards Christ and Christians, and also against the usurers, in whose toils the Christians were ensnared. He declared even that their synagogues, the scene of their blasphemies and calumnies, should be burnt, and they themselves compelled to take to honest handicraft, or be hunted from the country.

In the grand and beautiful labour of his life, the German translation of the Bible, he was busily occupied until his death. After the second chief edition had appeared, in 1541, he endeavoured to improve, at least in some points, those which followed in 1543 and 1545. He meditated also revising and further improving the most important of his sermons, which have been left to posterity. After having undertaken this task in 1540 with a number of them, he caused three years later the 'Summer-Postills,' which Roth had previously edited and brought out, to be published in a new form by his colleague Cruciger. This work was now completed by the addition of his sermons on the Epistles.

We have already seen how earnestly, even before the great end should come, Luther longed for his eternal rest, and for release from the struggles and labours of his earthly life, and the burden of his bodily suffering. He spoke of his death with calmness but with deep earnestness, and, indeed, with a touch of humour which pained those who heard him speak, or read his writings. Thus, when in March 1544 the Elector's wife, Sybil, asked him 'anxiously and diligently' about his own health and that of his wife and children, he answered: 'Thank God, we are well, and better than we deserve of God. But no wonder, if I am sometimes shaky in the head. Old age is creeping on me, which in itself is cold and unsightly, and I am ill and weak. The pitcher goes to the well until it breaks. I have lived long enough; God grant me a happy end, that this useless body may reach His people beneath the earth, and go to feed the worms. Consider that I have seen the best that I shall ever see on earth. For it looks as if evil times were coming. God help his own. Amen.'

CHAPTER VII.

LUTHER'S LATER LIFE: DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL DETAILS.

Frequently as Luther complained of his old age and ever-increasing weakness, lassitude, and uselessness, his writings and letters give evidence not only of an indomitable power and unquenchable ardour, but also, and often enough, of those cheerful, merry moods, which rose superior to all his sufferings, disappointments, and anger. He himself declared that his many enemies, especially the sectaries, who were always attacking him, always made him young again. The true source of his strength he found in his Lord and Saviour, Whose strength is made perfect in weakness, and to Whom he clung with a firm and tranquil faith. To this, indeed, we must add one particularly favourable influence, in regard to his life and calling, which had been awakened since his marriage. In speaking of his family, his wife, and his children, he is always full of thanks to God; his heart swells with emotion, and he breathes amid his heated labours and struggles a fresh and bracing air. Just as, during the Diet of Augsburg, he had pointed out encouragingly to the Elector the happy Paradise which God had allowed to bloom for him in his little boys and girls, so he himself was permitted to experience and enjoy this Paradise at home. In his domestic no less than in his public life he saw a vocation marked out for him by God; not, indeed, as if he, the Reformer, had here any peculiar path of life, or exceptional duties to perform, but so that in that holy estate ordained for all men, however despised by arrogant monks and priests, and dishonoured by the

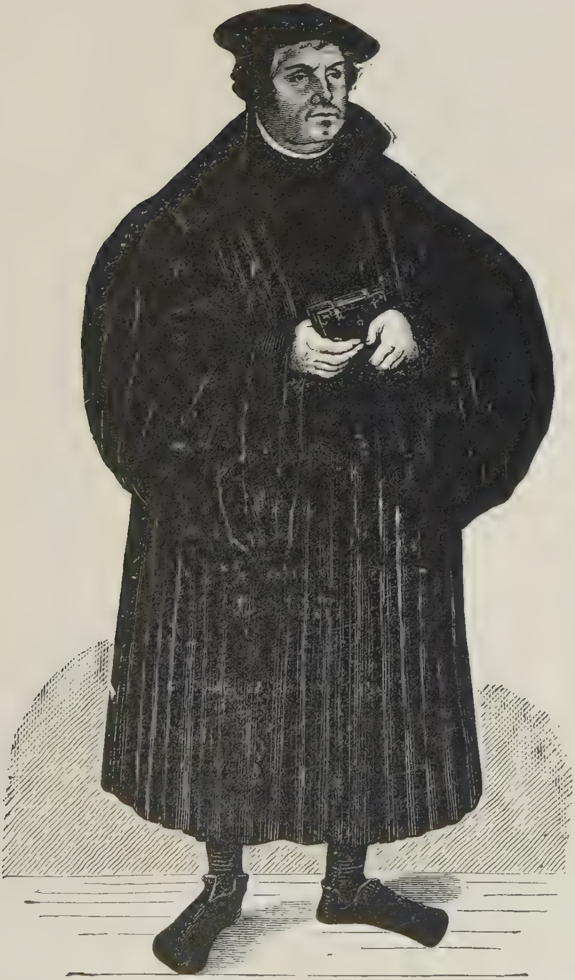

FIG. 47.—LUTHER. (From a portrait by Cranach, in his Album, at Berlin.)

sensual, he felt himself called on to serve God, as was the duty of all men and all Christians alike, and to enjoy the blessings which God had given him.

Five children were now growing up. The eldest, John, or Hänschen (Jack), was followed, during the troublous days of 1527, by his first little daughter, Elizabeth. Eight months after, as he told a friend, she already said good-bye to him, to go to Christ, through death to life; and he was forced to marvel how sick at heart, nay, almost womanish, he felt at her departure. In May 1529 he was comforted to some extent by the birth of a little Magdalene or Lenchen (Lena). Then followed the boys: Martin in 1531, and Paul in 1533. The former was born only a few days—if not the very day—before the feast of St. Martin, and the birthday of his father; hence he received the same name. His son Paul he named in memory of the great Apostle, to whom he owed so much. At his baptism he expressed the hope that 'perhaps the Lord God might train up in him a new enemy of the Pope or the Turks.' The youngest child was a little daughter, Margaret, who was born in 1534.

His family included also an aunt of his wife, Magdalene von Bora. She had been formerly a nun in the same cloister as her niece, where she had filled the post of head-nurse. She lived among Luther's children like a beloved grandmother. It was she whom Luther meant by the 'Aunt Lena,' of whom he wrote to his little Hans in 1530 saying, 'Give her a kiss from me;' and when in 1537 he was able to travel homewards from Schmalkald, where he had been in such imminent peril of death, he wrote to his wife: 'Let the dear little children, together with Aunt Lena, thank their true Father in Heaven.' She died, probably, shortly afterwards. Luther comforted her with the words: 'You will not die, but sleep away as in a cradle, and when the morning dawns, you will rise and live for ever.'

At this time Luther had two orphan nieces living

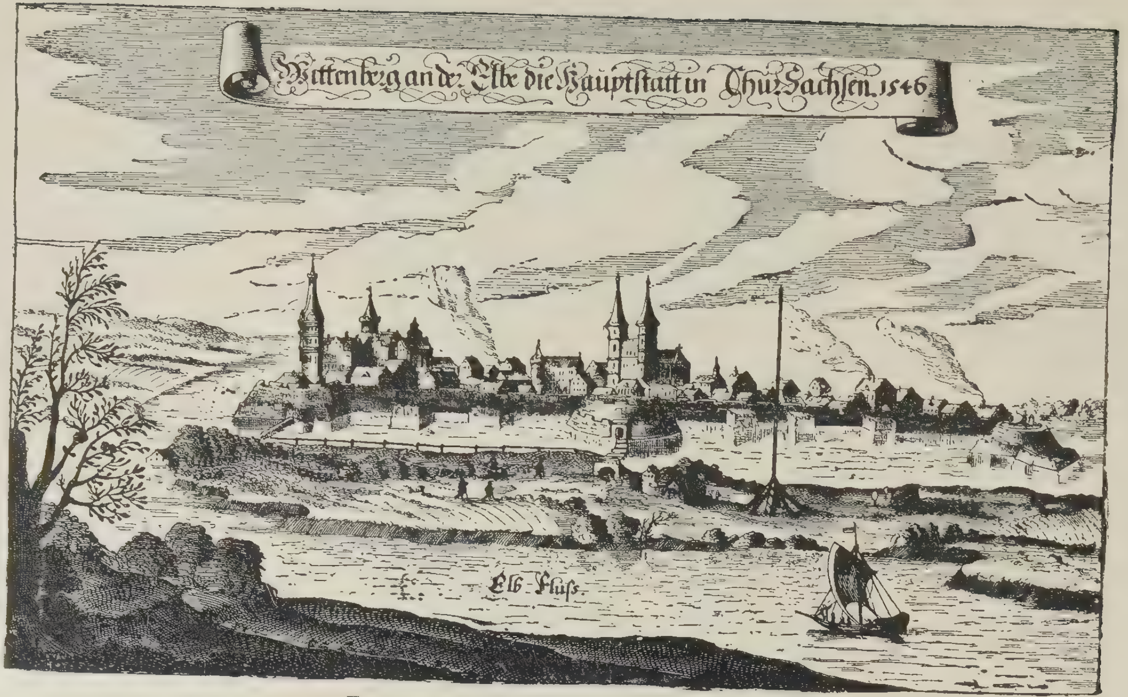
Wittenberg an der Elbe die Hauptſtatt in Chur Sachſen. 1546
Elb Fluſs

FIG. 48. – WITTENBERG. (From an old engraving.)

with him, Lene and Else Kaufmann of Mansfeld, sisters of Cyriac, whom we found with him at Coburg, and also a young relative, of whom we know nothing further than that her name was Anna. Lene was betrothed in 1538 to the worthy treasurer of the University of Wittenberg, Ambrosius Berndt, and Luther gave the wedding. He used also from time to time to have some young student nephews at his house.

When his boys grew up and the time came for them to learn, he had a resident tutor for them. For his own assistance he engaged a young man as amanuensis; thus we find Veit Dietrich with him at Coburg in this capacity. We hear afterwards of a young pupil—indeed, of two or more—who lived with Dietrich at Luther's house. This seems, however, to have somewhat overtaxed his wife; in the autumn of 1534 Dietrich left his house on that account.

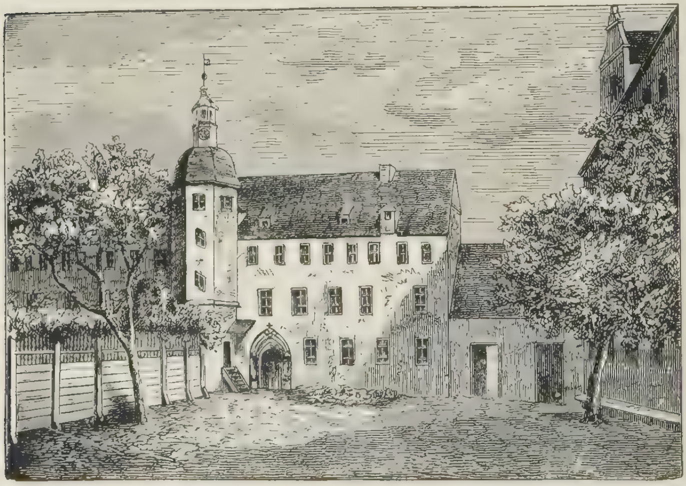

FIG. 49.—THE "LUTHER-HOUSE" (previously the Convent), before its recent restoration.

Luther, like other professors, used to take several students for payment to his table. Among these there were men of riper years who were eager, nevertheless, to share in the studies at Wittenberg, and, above all things, to make his acquaintance. Besides this, his house was open to a number of guests, theologians and others, of high or low degree, who called on him in passing through the town.

The dwelling-place of this large and growing household was a portion of the former Convent. The Elector John Frederick had assigned it to Luther for his own. The house, which had not been completed when the Reformation began, was still unfinished when Luther went there, and it needed many improvements. The present richer architectural features of the building date from a very recent restoration. It stood against the town wall, and was protected by the Elbe. His own small study looked out in this direction, and formed a gable above the

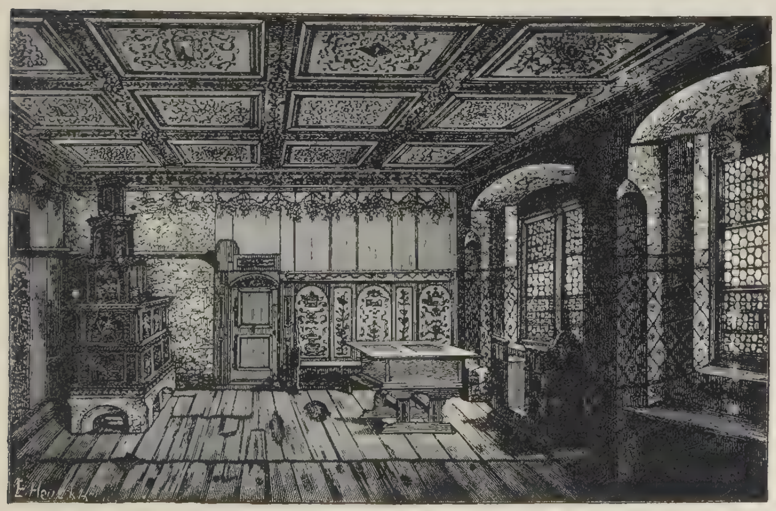

Fig. 50. – Luther's Room.

water of the moat; though, as he complained in 1530, it was threatened with alterations for military purposes, and perhaps during his lifetime fell a prey to them. Only one of the larger rooms of the house, situated in front, has been preserved in the recollection of posterity, and is now called Luther's room. It was probably the chief sitting-room of the family.

The young couple possessed at first a very slender maintenance. Neither of them had any private means. When, in 1527, Luther was lying apparently on his death-bed, he had nothing to leave his wife but the cups which had been given him as presents, and it happened that he was obliged to pawn even these to find money for their immediate wants.

By degrees, however, his income and property increased. His salary as professor at the University (he received no honorarium for his lectures) was raised on his marriage by the Elector John from 100 to 200 gulden, and John Frederick added 100 gulden more—the value of a gulden at that time being equal to about 16 marks of the present German money. He received, also, regular payments in kind. Now and then he had a special present from the Elector, such as a fine piece of cloth, a cask of wine, or some venison, with greetings from his Highness. In 1536 John Frederick sent him two casks of wine, saying that it was that year's growth of his vineyards, and that Luther would find how good it was when he tasted it. Luther's share of his father's property was 250 gulden, which he was to be paid later in small instalments by his brother James, who was heir to the real estate. In 1539 Bugenhagen brought him from Denmark an offering of 100 gulden, and two years afterwards the Danish king gave him and his children an allowance of 50 gulden a year. Luther never troubled himself much about his expenses, and gave with generous liberality what he earned. His wife kept things together for the household, managed it with business-like energy and talent, and tried to add to their income.

They enlarged their garden by buying some more strips adjoining it, as well as a field. In 1540 Luther purchased for 610 gulden from a brother of his wife, who was in needy circumstances, the small farm of Zülsdorf or Zulsdorf, between Leipzig and Borna—it must not be confounded with another village of the same name. The market at Wittenberg being usually very poorly furnished, his wife sought to supply their domestic wants by her own economy. She planted the garden with all sorts of trees, among these even mulberry-trees and fig-trees, and she cultivated also hops; and there was a small fish-pond. This little property she loved to manage and superintend in person. At Wittenberg she brewed, as was then the custom, their own beer, the Convent being privileged in that respect. We hear of her keeping a number of pigs, and arranging for their sale. Luther incidentally .makes mention of a coachman among his other servants. Finally, in 1541, Luther purchased a small house near his residence at the Convent, fearing that he would have to give up the latter entirely for the work of fortification, and thus be prevented from leaving it to his wife. He was only obliged in ten years to pay off a portion of the purchase money.

In this happy married life and home the great Reformer found his peace and refreshment; in it he found his vocation as a man, a husband, and a father. Speaking from his own experience he said: 'Next to God's Word, the world has no more precious treasure than holy matrimony. God's best gift is a pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping wife, with whom you may live peacefully, to whom you can entrust your goods, and body, and life.' He speaks of the married state, moreover, as a life which, if rightly led, is full to overflowing of good works. He knows, on the other hand, of many 'stubborn and strange couples, who neither care for their children, nor love each other from their hearts.' Such people, he said, were not human beings; they made their homes a hell.

In his language about this life and his own conduct in it, there is no trace of sentimentality, exaggerated emotion, or artificial idealism. It is a strong, sturdy, and, as many have thought, a somewhat rough genuineness of nature, but at the same time full of tenderness, purity, and fervour; and with it is combined that heartfelt and loyal devotion to his Heavenly Creator and Lord, and to His Will and His commands, which marked the character of Luther to the last.

With regard to his children, Luther had resolved from the moment of their birth to consecrate them to God, and wean them from a wicked, corrupt, and accursed world. In several of his letters he entreats his friends with great earnestness to stand godfather to one of his children, and to help the poor little heathen to become a Christian, and pass from the death of sin to a holy and blessed regeneration. In making this request of a young Bohemian nobleman, then staying in his house, on behalf of his son Martin, he grew so earnest that, to the surprise of all present, his voice trembled; this, he said, was caused by the Holy Spirit of God, for the cause he was pleading was God's, and it demanded reverence. And yet, in the simple, natural, innocent, and happy ways of children he recognised the precious handiwork of God and His protecting Hand. He loved to watch the games and pleasures of his little ones; all they did was so spontaneous and so natural. Children, he said, believe so simply and undoubtedly that God is in Heaven and is their God and their dear Father, and that there is everlasting life. On hearing one day one of his children prattling about this life and of the great joy in Heaven with eating, and dancing, and so forth, he said, 'Their life is the most blessed and the best; they have none but pure thoughts and happy imaginations.' At the sight of his little children seated round the table, he called to mind the exhortation of Jesus, that we must 'become as little children;' and added, 'Ah! dear God! Thou hast done clumsily in exalting children—such poor little simpletons—so high. Is it just and right that Thou shouldst reject the wise, and receive the foolish? But God our Lord has purer thoughts than we have; He must, therefore, refine us, as said the fanatics; He must hew great boughs and chips from us, before He makes such children and little simpletons of us.'

In what a childlike spirit Luther understood to talk to his children is shown by his letter from Coburg to his little Hans, then fourteen years old. He himself taught them to pray, to sing, and to repeat the Catechism. Of his little daughter Margaret he could tell one of her godfathers how she had learnt to sing hymns when only four years old. His hymn 'From the highest Heaven I come,' the freshest, most joyful, most childlike song that has ever been heard from children's lips at Christmas, he composed as a father who celebrated that joyous festival with his own children. It appeared first in the year 1535. He might well, after the manner of old Festival plays, have let an angel step in among them, who in the opening verses should bring them the good tidings in the Gospel, to which they should answer with 'Therefore let us all be joyful.' The words 'Therefore I am always joyful, Free to dance and free to sing,' call to mind an old custom of accompanying the Christmas hymn with a dance.

Luther warned against all outbursts of passion and undue severity towards children, and carefully guarded himself against such errors, remembering the bitter experiences of his own childhood in that respect. But he could be angry and strict enough when occasion required; he used to say he would rather have a dead son than a bad one.

There was no really good school at Wittenberg for his boys, and Luther himself could not devote as much time to them as they required. He took a resident tutor for them, a young theologian. His boy John nevertheless gave some trouble with his teaching and bringing up. His father, contrary to his own wishes, seems to have been too weak, and his mother's fondness for her first-born seems to have somewhat spoilt him. Luther gave the boy over afterwards to his friend Mark Crodel, the Rector of the school at Torgau, whom he held in high respect as a grammarian, and as a pedagogue of grave and strict morals.

His favourite child was little Lena, a pious, gentle, affectionate little girl, and devoted to him with her whole heart. A charming picture of her remains, by Cranach, a friend of the family. But she died in the bloom of early youth, on September 20, 1542, after a long and severe illness. The grief he had felt at the loss of his daughter Elizabeth was now renewed and intensified. When she was lying on her sick-bed, he said, 'I love her very much indeed; but, dear God, if it is Thy will to take her hence, I would gladly she were with Thee.' To Magdalene herself he said, 'Lena, dear, my little daughter, thou wouldst love to remain here with thy father; art thou willing to go to that other Father?' 'Yes, dear father,' she answered; 'just as God wills.' And when she was dying, he fell on his knees beside her bed, wept bitterly, and prayed for her redemption, and she fell asleep in his arms. As she lay in her coffin, he looked at her and exclaimed, 'Ah! my darling Lena, thou wilt rise again and shine like a star—yea, as the sun;' and added, 'I am happy in the spirit, but in the flesh I am very sorrowful. The flesh will not be subdued: parting troubles one above measure; it is a wonderful thing to think that she is assuredly in peace, and that all is well with her, and yet to be so sad.' To the mourners he said, 'I have sent a saint to Heaven: could mine be such a death as hers, I would welcome such a death this moment.' He expressed the same sorrow, and the same exultation in his letters to his friends. To Jonas he wrote: 'You will have heard that my dearest daughter Magdalene is born again in the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Although I and my wife ought only to thank God with joy for her happy departure,

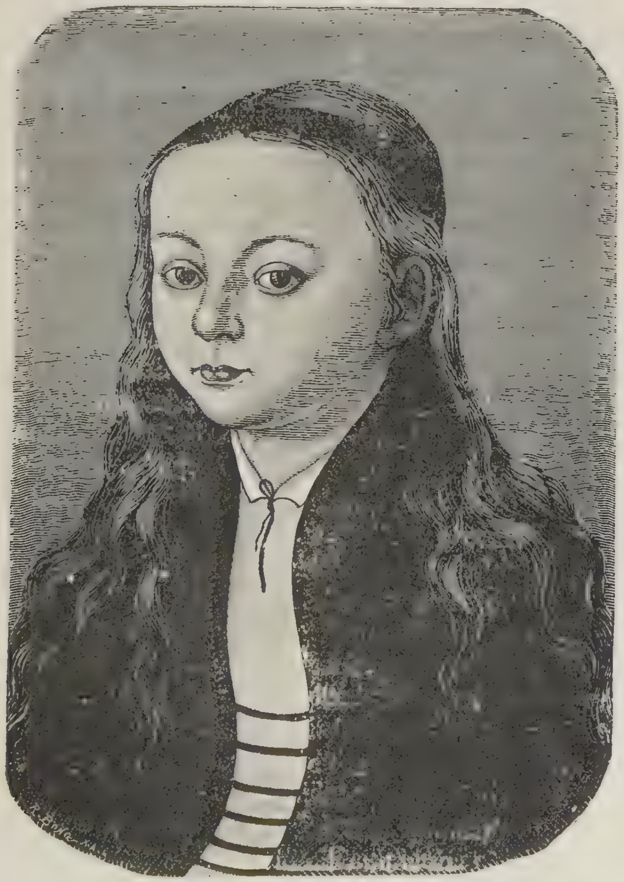

Fig. 51.—Luther's Daughter 'Lene.' (From Cranach's portrait.)

whereby she has escaped the power of the world, the flesh, the Turks, and the devil, yet so strong is natural love that we cannot bear it without sobs and sighs from the heart, without a bitter sense of death in ourselves. So deeply printed on our hearts are her ways, her words, her gestures, whether alive or dying, that even Christ's death cannot drive away this agony.' His little Hans, whom his sick sister longed to see once more, he had sent for from Torgau a fortnight before she died: he wrote for that purpose to Crodel, saying 'I would not have my conscience reproach me afterwards for having neglected anything.' But when several weeks later, about Christmas-time, under the influence of grief and the tender words which his mother had spoken to him, a desire came over the boy to leave Torgau and live at home, his father exhorted him to conquer his sorrow like a man, not to increase by his own the grief of his mother, and to obey God, who had appointed him, through his parents' direction, to live at Torgau.

The care of the children and of the whole household fell to the share of Frau Luther, and her husband could trust her with it in perfect confidence. She was a woman of strong, ruling, practical nature, who enjoyed hard work and plenty of it. She served her husband at all times, after her own manner, with faithful and affectionate devotion. He must often have felt grateful, amidst his physical and mental sufferings, and the violent storms and temptations that vexed his soul, that a helpmate of such a sound constitution, such strong nerves, and such a clever, sensible mind should have fallen to his share.

Luther lived with her in thankful love and harmony; nor have even the calumnies of malicious enemies been able to cast a shadow of doubt upon the perfect concord of his married life. In his 'Table Talk' he says of her: 'I am, thank God, very well, for I have a pious, faithful wife, on whom a man may safely rest his heart.' And again he said once to her, 'Katie, you have a pious husband, who loves you; you are an empress.' In words now grave, now humorous, he told her of his tender love for her; and how trustful and open-hearted were their relations to each other we gather from the way in which he mocks and occasionally teases her for her little weaknesses. In later life and in his last letters he calls her his 'heartily beloved housewife' and his 'darling,' and he often signs himself 'your love' and 'your old love,' and again 'your dear lord.' Still he said frankly and quietly that his original suspicion that Catharine was proud was well-founded. In some of his letters he speaks of her as his 'lord Katie' and his 'gracious wife,' and of himself as her 'willing servant.' Once he declared that if he had to marry again, he would carve an obedient wife out of stone, as he despaired of finding obedience in wives. He spoke also of the talkativeness of his Katie. Referring to her loving but over-anxious care for him on his last journey, he called her a holy, careful woman. From her thrift and energy she gained from him the nicknames of Lady Zulsdorf, and Lady of the Pigmarket; thus one of his last letters is addressed to 'my heartily beloved housewife, Catharine, Lady Luther, Lady Doctor, Lady Zulsdorf, Lady of the Pigmarket, and whatever else she may be.'

The 'careful' Catharine was not permitted to check the kind liberality of her husband. His friend Mathesius tells us, of their early married life, 'A poor man made him a pitiful tale of distress, and having no cash with him, Luther came to his wife—she being then confined—for the godparents' money, and brought it to the poor man, saying, 'God is rich, He will supply what is wanted.' Afterwards, however, he grew more careful, seeing how often he was imposed upon. 'Rogues,' he said, 'have sharpened my wits.' An example of how particular, nay anxious, he was never even to let it seem that he sought for presents or other profit for himself, was given in his letter to Amsdorf, declining a gift of venison. He wrote once to the Elector John, who had sent him an offering: 'I have unfortunately more, especially from your Highness, than I can conscientiously keep. As a preacher, it is not fitting for me to enjoy a superfluity, nor do I covet it; . . . therefore I beseech your Highness to wait until I ask of you.' In 1539, when Bugenhagen brought to him the hundred gulden from the King of Denmark, he wished to give him half of it, for the service Bugenhagen had rendered him during his absence. For his office of preacher in the town church he never received any payment; the town from time to time made him a present of wine from the council-cellar, and lime and stones for building his house. For his writings he received nothing from the publishers. Against over-anxious cares and troubles, and setting her heart too much on worldly possessions, he earnestly cautioned his wife, and insisted that amid the numerous household matters she should not neglect to read the Bible. Once in 1535 he promised her fifty gulden if she would read the Bible through, whereupon, as he told a friend, it became a 'very serious matter to her.'

Luther frequently assisted his wife in her household. He was very fond of gardening and agriculture, and we have seen how he sent commissions to friends for stocking his garden at Wittenberg. On one occasion, when going to fish with his wife in their little pond, he noticed with joy how she took more pleasure in her few fish than many a nobleman did in his great lakes with many hundred draughts of fishes. In 1539 he had to order a chest at Torgau for his 'lord Katie,' for their store of house-linen. Of the handsome and elaborate way in which Catharine thought of ornamenting the exterior of their house—the home of her illustrious husband—a fine specimen remains in the door of the Luther-haus at Wittenberg. Luther wrote, by her wish, to a friend at Pirna in 1539, pastor Lauterbach, about a 'carved house-door,' for the width of which she sent the measurement. The door, carved in sandstone, and bearing the date 1540, has on one side Luther's bust and on the other his crest, and below are two small seats, built there according to the custom of the times.

In view of his approaching death, Luther wished, in 1542, to provide for his devoted wife by a will. He left her for her lifetime and absolute property the little farm of Zulsdorf, the small house at Wittenberg (already mentioned), and his goblets and other treasures, such as rings, chains, &c , which he valued at about 1,000 gulden. In doing so, he

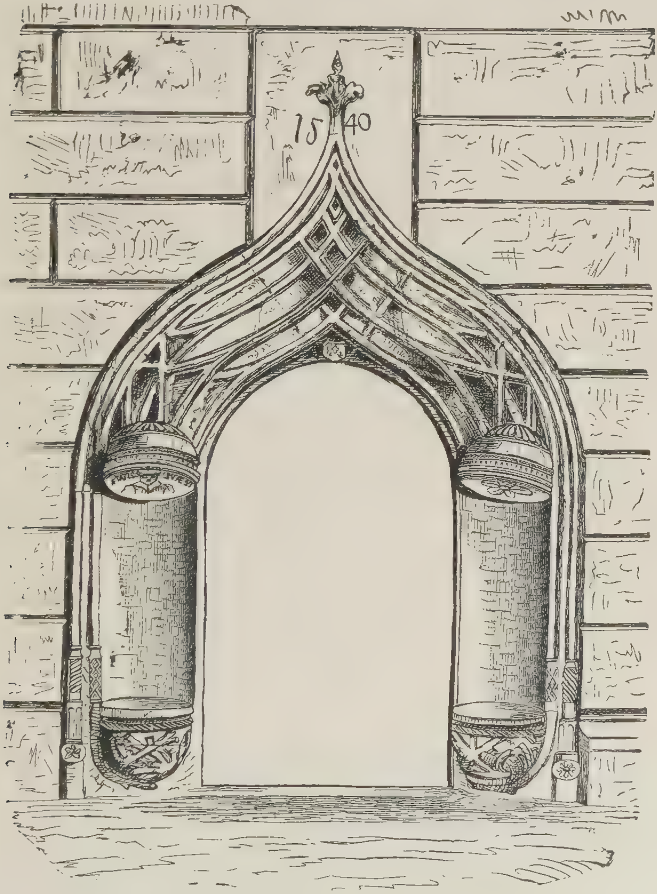

FIG. 52.—DOOR OF LUTHER'S HOUSE AT WITTENBERG.

thanked her for having been to him a 'pious, true wife at all times, full of loving, tender care towards him, and for having borne to him and trained, by God's blessing, five children surviving.' And he wished to provide therewith that she 'must not receive from the children, but the children from her; that they must honour and obey her, as God hath commanded.' He further bade her pay off the debt which was still owing (probably for the house), amounting to about 450 gulden, because, with the exception of his few treasures, he had no money to leave her. In making this provision he no doubt considered that, according to the law, the inheritance of a married woman who had formerly been a nun might be disputed, together with the legitimacy of her marriage. Luther did not wish to bind himself in his will to legal forms. He besought the Elector graciously to protect his bequest, and concluded his will with these proud words:

'Finally, seeing I do not use legal forms, for which I have my own reasons, I desire all men to take these words as mine—a man known openly in heaven, on earth, and in hell also, who has enough reputation or authority to be trusted and believed better than any notary. To me, a poor, unworthy, miserable sinner, God, the Father of all mercy, has entrusted the Gospel of His dear Son, and has made me true and faithful therein, and has so preserved and found me hitherto, that through me many in this world have received the Gospel, and hold me as a teacher of the truth, despite of the Pope's ban, of emperor, king, princes, priests, and all the wrath of the devil. Let them believe me also in this small matter, especially as this is my hand, not altogether unknown. In hope that it will be enough for men to say and prove that this is the earnest, deliberate meaning of Dr. Martin Luther, God's notary and witness in his Gospel, confirmed by his own hand and seal.'

The will is dated the day of the Epiphany, January 6, 1542, and was witnessed by Melancthon, Cruciger, and

Bugenhagen, whose attestations and signatures appear below. After Luther's death, John Frederick immediately ratified it.

As regards his servants, Luther was particularly careful that they should have nothing to complain of against him, for the devil, he said, had a sharp eye upon him, to be able to cast a slur upon his teaching. To those who served him faithfully, he was ever gentle, grateful, and even indulgent. There was a certain Wolfgang, or Wolf Sieberger, whom he had taken as early as 1517 into his service at the convent—an honest but weak man, who knew of no other means of livelihood. Him Luther retained in his service throughout his life, and tried to make some provision for his future. He once sought, as we have seen, to practise turning with him, but of this nothing further is related. He loved, too, to joke with him in his own hearty manner. When, in 1534, Wolf built a fowling-floor or place for catching birds, he reprimanded him for it in a written indictment, making the 'good, honourable' birds themselves lodge a complaint against him. They pray Luther to prevent his servant, or at least to insist upon Wolf (who was a sleepy fellow), strewing grain for them in the evening, and then not rising before eight o'clock in the morning; else, they would pray to God to make him catch in the day-time frogs and snails in their stead, and let fleas and other insects crawl over him at night; for why should not Wolf rather employ his wrath and vindictiveness against the sparrows, daws, mice, and such like? When a servant named Rischmann parted from him, in 1532, after several years of hard work, Luther sent word to his wife from Torgau, where he was then staying with the Elector, to dismiss him 'honourably,' and with a suitable present. 'Think,' he wrote, 'how often we have given to bad men, when all has been lost; so be liberal, and do not let such a good fellow want. . . . . Do not fail; for a goblet is there. Think from whom you got it. God will give us another, I know.'

His guests valued highly his company and conversation, especially those men who came from far and near to visit him. Several of them have recorded sayings from his lips on these occasions. Luther's 'Table Talk,' which we possess now in print, is founded for the most part on records given by Veit Dietrich and Lauterbach just mentioned, who before his call to Pirna in 1539, when deacon at Wittenberg, was one of Luther's closest friends and his daily guest. These memorials, however, have been elaborated and recast many times, by a strange hand, in an arbitrary and unfortunate manner. A publication of the original text, from which recently a diary of Lauterbach, of the year 1538, has already appeared, may now be looked for. Last, but not least, we have to mention John Mathesius, who, after having been a student at Wittenberg in 1529, and then rector of the school at Joachimsthal, returned to study at Wittenberg from 1540 to 1542, and obtained the honour which he sought for, of being a guest at Luther's table. Deeply impressed as he was by his intercourse with the Reformer, he described his impressions to his congregation at Joachimsthal, when afterwards their pastor, in addresses from the pulpit, which were printed, and gave them a sketch of Luther's life, with numerous anecdotes about him. He thus became Luther's first biographer, and, from his personal intimacy with his friend, and his own true-heartedness, fervour, and genuineness of nature, he must ever remain endeared to the followers and admirers of the great Reformer.

Mathesius tells us, indeed, how Luther used often to sit at table wrapt in deep and anxious thought, and would sometimes keep a cloister-like silence throughout the meal. At times even he would work between the courses, or at meals or immediately after, dictate sermons to friends who had to preach, but who wanted practice in the art. But when once conversation was opened, it flowed with ease and freedom, and, as Mathesius says, even merrily. The friends used to call Luther's speeches their 'table-spice.' His topics varied according to circumstances and the occasion—things spiritual and temporal; questions of faith and conduct; the works of God and the deeds of man; events past and present; hints and short practical suggestions for ecclesiastical life and office; and apophthegms of worldly

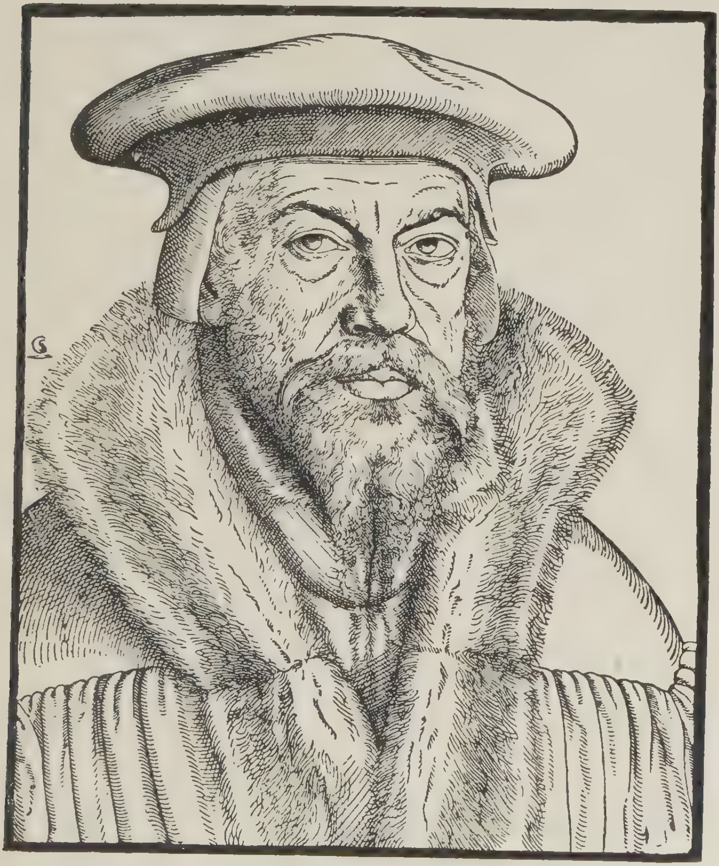

Fig. 53.—Mathesius. (From an old woodcut.)

wisdom; all enriched with proverbs of every kind and German rhymes, which Luther had a great aptitude in composing. Jocular moods were mingled with deep gravity and even indignation. But in all he said, as in all he did, he was guided constantly by the loftiest principles, by the highest considerations of morality and religious truth, and that in the simple and straightforward manner which was his nature, utterly free from affectation or artificial effort.

In these his discourses, it is true, as in his writings and letters, nay, sometimes in his addresses from the pulpit, expressions and remarks fell occasionally from his lips which sound to modern ears extremely coarse. His was a frank, rugged nature, with nothing slippery, nothing secretly impure about it. His friends and guests spoke of the 'chaste lips' of Luther: 'He was,' says Mathesius, 'a foe to unchastity and loose talk. As long as I have been with him I have never heard a shameful word fall from his lips.' It was a great contrast to the coarse indecencies which he denounced with such fierce indignation in the monks, his former brethren, as also to the more subtle indelicacies which were practised in those days by so many elegant Humanists of modern culture, both ecclesiastics and laymen.

Luther's conversation was also remarkable for its freedom from any spiteful or frivolous gossip, of which even at Wittenberg there was then no lack. Of such scandal-mongers, who sought to pry out evil in their neighbours, Luther used frequently to say, 'They are regular pigs, who care nothing about the roses and violets in the garden, but only stick their snouts into the dirt.'

After dinner there was usually music with the guests and children; sacred and secular songs were sung, together with German and sometimes old Latin hymns.

Luther also had a bowling-alley made for his young friends, where they would disport themselves with running and jumping. He liked to throw the first ball himself, and was heartily laughed at when he missed the mark. He would turn then to the young folk, and remind them in his pleasant way that many a one who thought he would do better, and knock down all the pins at once, would very likely miss them all, as they would often have to find in future their life and calling.

In his own personal relations towards God, Luther followed persistently the road which he saw revealed by Christ, and which he pointed out to others. He never lost the consciousness of his own unworthiness, and therefore unholiness. In this consciousness he sought refuge, with simple and childlike faith, in God's love and mercy, which thus assured him of forgiveness and salvation, of victory over the world and the devil, and of the freedom wherewith a child of God may use the things of this world. He clung fondly to simple, childlike forms of faith, and to common rites and ordinances. Every morning he used to repeat with his children the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and a psalm. 'I do this,' he says in one of his sermons, 'in order to keep up the habit, and not let the mildew grow upon me.' He took part faithfully in the church services; he who was wont to pray so unceasingly and fervently in his own chamber declared that praying in company with others soothed him far more than private prayer at home.

Lofty, nay proud as was the self-assurance he expressed in his mission, and though possessed, as Mathesius says, of all the heart and courage of a true man, yet he was personally of a very plain and unasserting manner: Mathesius calls him the most humble of men, always willing to follow good advice from others. Like a brother he dealt with the lowliest of his brethren, while mixing at the same time with the highest in the land with the most perfect and unconscious simplicity. Troubled souls, who complained to him how hard they found it to possess the faith he preached, he comforted with the assurance that it was no easier matter for himself, and that he had to pray God daily to increase his faith. His saying, 'A great doctor must always remain a pupil,' was meant especially for himself. The modesty which made him willing, even in the early days of his reforming labours, to yield the first place to his younger friend Melancthon, he displayed to the end, as we have seen in reference to Melancthon's principal work, the 'Loci Communes.' Whenever he was asked for a really good book for theological studies and the pure exposition of the gospel, he named the Bible first and then Melancthon's book. During the Diet at Augsburg we heard how highly he esteemed the words even of a Brenz, in comparison with his own. Touching Melancthon, we must add an earlier public utterance of Luther's, dating from 1529: 'I must root out,' he said, 'the trunks and stems. . . . . I am the rough woodman who has to make a path, but Philip goes quietly and peacefully along it, builds and plants, sows and waters at his pleasure.' He said nothing of how much others depended on his own power and independence of mind, not only as regarded the task of making the path, but in the whole business of planting and working, and how Melancthon only stamped the gold which Luther had dug up and melted in the furnace. The later years of his life were embittered by the conviction, gradually forced upon him, that his former strength and energy had deserted him. His remarks on this subject seem often exaggerated, but they were certainly meant in all seriousness: he felt as he did, because the urgent need of completing his task remained so vividly impressed upon his mind. He wished and hoped that God would suffer him—the now useless instrument of His Word—to stand at least behind the doors of His kingdom. He wrote to Myconius, when the latter was dangerously ill, saying that his friend must really survive him: 'I beg this; I will it, and let my will be done, for it seeks not my own pleasure, but the glory of God.'

With childlike joy he recognised God's gifts in nature, in garden and field, plants and cattle. This joy finds constant expression in his 'Table Talk,' and even in his sermons. It was chiefly awakened by the beauties of spring. With sorrow he declares it to be the well-earned penalty of his past sins that in his old age he should not be able, as he might do and had need of doing, on account of the burdens of business, to enjoy the gardens, the bud and bloom of tree and flower, and the song of the birds. 'We should be so happy in such a Paradise, if only there were no sin and death.' But he looks beyond this to another and a heavenly world, where all would be still more beautiful, and where an everlasting spring would reign and abide.

Among all the gifts which God has bestowed upon us for our use and enjoyment, music was to him the most precious; he even assigned to it the highest honour next to theology. He himself had considerable talent for the art, and not only played the lute, and sang melodiously with his seemingly weak but penetrating voice, but was able even to compose. He valued music particularly as the means of driving away the devil and his temptations, as well as for its softening and refining influence. 'The heart,' he said, 'grows satisfied, refreshed, and strengthened by music.' He noticed, as a wonder wrought by God, how the air was able to give forth, by a slight movement of the tongue and throat, guided by the mind, such sweet and powerful sounds; and what an infinite variety there was of voice and language among the many thousand birds, and still more so among men. Luther's best and most valued means of natural refreshment, and the recreation of his mind and body, remained always his intercourse and friendship with others—with wife and children, with his friends and neighbours. Such was his own experience, and so he would advise the sorrowful who sought his counsel in like manner to come out of their solitude. He saw in this intercourse also an ordinance of Divine wisdom and love. A friendly talk and a good merry song he often declared to be the best weapon against evil and sorrowful thoughts.

About his own bodily care and enjoyment, even with all his conviction of Christian liberty and his hostility to monkish scruples and sanctity, he cared very little. He was content with simple fare, and he would forget to eat and drink for days amid the press of work. His friends wondered how such a portly frame could be consistent with such a very meagre diet, and not one of his hostile contemporaries has ever been able to allege against him that he had belied by his own conduct the zeal with which he inveighed against the immoderate eating and drinking of his fellow-Germans; but he preserved his Christian liberty in this matter. In the evenings he would say to his pupils at the supper-table, 'You young fellows, you must drink the Elector's health and mine, the old man's, in a bumper. We must look for our pillows and bolsters in the tankard.' And in his lively and merry entertainments with his friends the 'cup that cheers' was always there. He could even call for a toast when he heard bad news, for next to a fervent Lord's Prayer and a good heart, there was no better antidote, he used to say, to care.

His physical sufferings were chiefly confined to the pains in his head, which never wholly left him, and which increased from time to time, with fresh attacks of giddiness and fainting. The morning was always his worst time. His old enemy, moreover—the stone—returned in 1543 with alarming severity. Some time since an abscess had appeared on his left leg, which seemed at the time to have healed. Finding that a fresh breaking out of it seemed to relieve his head, his friend Ratzeberger, the Elector's physician, induced him to have a seton applied, and the issue thus kept open. His hair became white. He had long been speaking of himself as a prematurely old man, and quite worn out.

In spite of his sufferings he retained his peculiar bearing, with head thrown back and upturned face. His features, especially the mouth, now showed more plainly even than in earlier life the calm strength acquired by struggles and suffering. The pathos which later portraits have often given to his countenance is not apparent in the earlier ones, but rather an expression of melancholy. The deep glow and energy of his spirit, which even Cranach's pencil has failed wholly to represent, seems to have found chief expression in his dark eyes. These evidently struck the old rector of Wittenberg, Pollich, and the legate Caietan at Augsburg; it was with these that, on his arrival at Worms, the legate Aleander saw him look around him 'like a demon'; it was these that 'sparkled like stars' on the young Swiss Kessler, so that he could 'hardly endure their gaze.' After his death, another acquaintance of his called them 'falcon's eyes'; and Melancthon saw in the brown pupils, encircled by a yellow ring, the keen, courageous eye of a lion.

This fire in Luther never died. Under the pressure of suffering and weakness, it only burst forth when stirred by opposition into new and fiercer flames. It became, indeed, more easily provoked in later life, and produced in him an irritation and restless impatience with the world and all its doings. His full and clear gaze was fixed on the Hereafter.

CHAPTER VIII.

LUTHER'S LAST YEAR AND DEATH.

The Emperor Charles, after concluding the peace of Crespy with King Francis, turned his policy entirely to ecclesiastical affairs. The Pope could no longer resist his urgent demand for a Council, and accordingly a bull, of November 1544, summoned one to assemble at Trent in the following March. With regard to the Turks, the Emperor sought to liberate his hands by means of a peaceful settlement and concessions. He entered into negotiations with them in 1545, in which he was supported by an ambassador from France. These led ultimately to the result that the Turks left him in possession, on payment of a tribute, of those frontier fortresses which he still occupied, and which they had previously demanded from him, and agreed to a truce for a year and a half. 'This is the way,' exclaimed Luther, 'in which war is now waged against those who have been denounced so many years as enemies to the name of Christ, and against whom the Romish Satan has amassed such heaps of gold by indulgences and other innumerable means of plunder.'

Meanwhile the Elector John had commissioned his theologians to prepare the scheme of reformation which was to be submitted according to the decree of the Diet at Spires. On January 14, 1545, they sent him a draft compiled by Melancthon. Luther headed with his own the list of signatures. It was a last great message of peace from his hand. The draft set forth clearly and distinctly the principles of the Evangelical Church; but expressed a hope that the bishops of the Catholic Church would fulfil the duties of their office, and promised them obedience if they accepted and furthered the preaching of the gospel in its purity. This was too moderate for the Elector. His chancellor Brück, however, assured him that Luther and the others were agreed with Melancthon, though the document bore no evidence of 'Doctor Martin's restless spirit.'

Nor did Luther even here insist on that strong expression of opinion with regard to the Lord's Supper which he himself gave to the doctrine of Christ's Bodily Presence in the Sacrament. They only spoke briefly of the 'receiving the true Body and Blood of Christ,' and of the object and benefit of this reception for the soul and for faith.

But Luther now unburdened his heart with redoubled energy and passion against the Pope and the Popedom, of which no mention had been made in the draft. In January 1545 he learned of that Papal letter in which the Holy Father had protested to his son the Emperor, with pathetic indignation, against the decrees of the Diet at Spires. Luther at first took it seriously for a forgery—a mere pasquinade—until he was assured by the Elector of the genuineness of this and another and similar letter, and thus provoked to take public steps against it. He thought that, if the brief was genuine, the Pope would sooner worship the Turks—nay, the devil himself—than ever dream of consenting to a reform in accordance with God's Word. Accordingly, he composed his pamphlet 'Against the Popedom at Rome, instituted by the Devil.' In this his 'restless spirit' spoke out once more with all its strength; he poured out the vials of his wrath in the plainest and most violent language—more violent than in any of his earlier writings—against the Antichrist of Rome. The very first word gives the Pope the title of 'the most hellish Father.' Luther is not surprised that to him and his Curia the words 'free Christian German Council' are sheer poison, death, and hell. But he asks him, what is the use of a Council at all if the Pope arrogates to himself beforehand, as his decrees fulminate, the right of altering and tearing up its decisions. Far better to spare the expense and trouble of such a farce, and say, 'We will believe and worship your hellship without any Councils.' The piece of arch-knavery practised by the Pope in himself announcing a Council against Emperor and Empire was, in fact, nothing new. The Popes from the very first had practised all kinds of devilish wickedness, treachery, and murder against the German Emperors. Luther recalls to mind how a Pope had caused the noble Conradin to be executed with the sword. Paul III., in his admonition to his 'son' the Emperor Charles, referred in pious strain to the example of Eli, the high-priest, who had been punished for not rebuking his sons for their sins. Luther now points him to his own, the Pope's natural son, whom the Pope was so anxious to enrich; he asks if Father Paul then had nothing to punish in him. It was well known what tricks Paul himself, with his insatiable maw, was playing together with his son with the property of the Church. Further, he puts before the Pope his cardinals and followers, who forsooth needed no admonition for their detestable iniquities. But his dear son Charles, it seemed, had wished to procure for the German Fatherland a happy peace and unity in religion, and to have a Christian Council, and, finding he had been made a fool of by the Pope for four-and-twenty years, at last to convene a national Council. This was his sin in the eyes of the Pope, who would like to see all Germany drowned in her own blood: the Pope could not forgive the Emperor for thwarting his horrible design. Luther dwells at length on such reflections in his introduction, and then says 'I must now stop, for my head is too weak, and I have not yet come to what I meant to say in this treatise.' This was the three points, as follow: Whether, indeed, it was true that the Pope was the head of Christendom; that none could judge and depose him; and that he had brought the Holy Roman Empire to the Germans, as he boasted so arrogantly he had done. On these points he then proceeds to enlarge once more with a wealth of searching proof. On the last point we hear him speak once more as a true German. He wished that the Emperor had left the Pope his anointing and coronation, for what made him truly Emperor was not these ceremonies, but the election of the princes. The Pope had never yielded a hairsbreadth to the Empire, but, on the contrary, had plundered it immoderately by his lying and deceit and idolatry. The book concludes thus: 'This devilish Popery is the supreme evil on earth, and the one that touches us most closely; it is one in which all the devils combine together. God help us! Amen.'

Cranach published a series of sketches or caricatures, controversial and satirical, against the Popedom, some of which are cynically coarse, one of them representing to his countrymen the murder of Conradin, the Pope himself beheading him, and another a German Emperor with the Pope standing on his neck. Luther added short verses to these pictures. But he disapproved of one of Cranach's caricatures, as insulting to woman.

We have seen already what degree of importance Luther attached to a Council appointed by the Pope. The Protestants could not, of course, consent to submit to the one at Trent. On the other hand, their demand that the Council must be a 'free' and a 'Christian' one in their sense of the terms was an impossibility for the Emperor and the Catholics; for it meant not only their independence of the Pope—which he could never assent to—but also a free reversion to the single rule and standard of Holy Scripture, with a possible rejection of tradition and the decrees of previous Councils. The Emperor thereupon granted something for appearance sake to the Protestant States by arranging another conference on religion to be held at Ratisbon in January 1546. He told the Pope, in

June 1545, that he could not engage to make war on the Protestants for at least another year. The Council was opened in December 1545, without the Protestants taking any part in it.

While all this was going on, the newly-opened rupture between Luther and the Swiss remained unhealed. In the spring of 1545 Bullinger published a clever reply to his 'Short Confession.' It could, however, effect no reconciliation, for, mild as was its language in comparison with the violence of Luther's, it made too much merit of this mildness, while, as Calvin, for example, accused the author, it imputed more to Luther than common fairness justified, took him to task for his manner of speaking, and contributed nothing to an understanding in point of dogma. From the impression produced by this letter upon Luther, fears were entertained again for Melancthon, who had continued to maintain a friendly correspondence with Bullinger; and Melancthon himself felt very anxious about the result. But not one harsh or suspicious or unkind word was uttered by Luther. He only wished to answer the Zurichers briefly and to the point, for he had written, he said, quite enough on the subject against Zwingli and Oecolampadius, and did not want to spoil the last years of his life with arrogant and idle chatter. He only inserted afterwards in a series of theses, with which he replied in the late summer of that year to a fresh condemnation pronounced against him by the theologians of Louvain, an article against the Zwinglians, declaring that they and all those who disgraced the Sacrament by denying the actual bodily reception of the true Body of Christ were undoubtedly heretics and schismatics from the Christian Church. This doctrinal antagonism was sufficient even now, when the test of actual war was imminent, to keep the Swiss excluded from the League of Schmalkald.

Luther still continued, in the face of menaces, to trust in God, his Helper hitherto, and he found in the latest signs of the times still more convincing proof of the End, which seemed to be at hand. In the miserable oppression of the Germano-Roman Empire by the Turks he saw a sign of its approaching downfall, as also in the impotence displayed by the Imperial Government even in small matters of administration. There was no longer any justice, any government; it was an Empire without an Empire; and he rejoiced to believe that with the end of this Empire the last day—the day of salvation—was approaching.

But more painful and harassing to him than even the threats of the Romanists and the attacks upon his teaching, which his own words, he was convinced, had long since refuted, was the condition of Wittenberg and the university. It was a favourite reproach against him of the Catholics that his doctrine yielded no fruits of strict morality. Notwithstanding all the rebukes which he had uttered for years, we hear of the old vices still rampant at Wittenberg the vices of gluttony, of increasing intemperance and luxury, especially at baptisms and weddings; of pride in dress and the low-cut bodices of ladies; of rioting in the streets; of the low women who corrupted the students; of extortion, deceit, and usury in trade; and of the indifference and inability of the authorities and the police to put down open immorality and misdemeanours. Things of which there were growing complaints at that time in the German towns and universities became intolerable to the aged Reformer, who had no longer the power to bring his whole influence to bear upon his own fellow-townsmen.

In the summer of 1545 he was tortured again by his old enemy the stone. On Midsummer day his tormentor—as he wrote to a friend—would have done for him had God not willed it otherwise. 'I would rather die,' he adds, 'than be at the mercy of such a tyrant.'

A few weeks later he sought refreshment for mind and body in a journey. He first travelled with his colleague Cruciger by way of Leipzig to Zeitz, where Cruciger had to settle a dispute between two clergymen. On the road he was cordially received by several acquaintances, and that did him good. At Zeitz he took part in the proceedings. He was anxious to proceed further, to Merseburg, for his friend there, George of Anhalt, had seized the opportunity to send him a pressing invitation, in order to receive from him his consecration. But the painful experiences he had made at Wittenberg pursued him on his travels, and were aggravated by much that he heard about his own town. On July 28 he wrote from Zeitz to his wife, saying, 'I should be so glad not to return to Wittenberg; my heart is grown cold, so that I don't care about being there any longer. . . . So I will roam about and rather beg my bread than vex my poor remaining days with the disorderly doings at Wittenberg, with my hard and precious labour all lost.' He actually wished that they should sell the house and garden at Wittenberg, and go and live at Zulsdorf. The Elector, he said, would surely leave him his salary at least for one year more, near as he was to the close of his fast-waning life, and he would spend the money in improving his little farm. He begged his wife, if she would, to let Bugenhagen and Melancthon know this.

The excitement, however, as might be hoped, was only temporary. To quiet his emotion, the university at once sent Bugenhagen and Melancthon to him, the Wittenberg magistrate sent the burgomaster, and the Elector his private physician Ratzeberger. The Elector also reminded him in a friendly manner that he ought to have apprised him beforehand of his intention to take this journey, to enable him to provide an escort and defray his expenses. The Wittenberg theologians, sent as deputies to Merseburg, had now arrived there, and met Luther on August 2, at the solemn consecration of George. Luther stayed with his host for a couple of days, during which he preached in the neighbouring town of Halle, and was here presented by the town-council with a cup of gold. This journey improved his health. After having paid a visit to the Elector, at his desire, at Torgau, he returned on the 16th of the month to Wittenberg, where an attempt was now being made to put down, by an ordinance of police, the immorality he had denounced.

He now resumed his lectures, in which he was still busily engaged with the Book of Genesis, and which he brought at length to an end on November 17. He also preached at Wittenberg several times in the afternoons, it being unadvisable for him to do so any longer in the mornings on account of his health. He further occupied himself in writing a sequel to his first book against the Papacy, and at the same time meditated a letter against the Sacramentarians.

The autumn of this year brought with it a matter from Mansfeld, having nothing indeed to do with religion or doctrine, but which called him away from Wittenberg. The Counts of Mansfeld had long been quarrelling among themselves about certain rights and revenues, especially in connection with Church patronage. Luther had already entreated them earnestly in God's name to come to a peaceful agreement. They now at length agreed so far as to invite his mediation, and obtained permission from the Elector, who, however, would rather have seen Luther spared this trouble. Luther all his life had cherished a warm and grateful affection for this his early home; whilst labouring for his great Fatherland of Germany, he called Mansfeld his own special fatherland. Wearied as he was, he resolved to serve his home once more.

At the beginning of October, accordingly, he journeyed thither with Melancthon and Jonas, but his visit proved in vain, since the Counts, before he could do anything for them, were called away to war. He held himself in readiness, however, to make a second attempt.

In the meantime Luther quickly composed another pamphlet, with reference to the Duke of Brunswick, who three years before had been driven from his country by the Landgrave Philip and the Saxon princes, and had now suddenly invaded it again, but was defeated and taken prisoner by the combined forces of the allied princes, assisted also by the Counts of Mansfeld. At the instigation of the chancellor Brück, and with the consent of his Elector, Luther addressed a public letter to the princes and the Landgrave, and had it printed. In it he warned them not to allow—as Philip for various reasons seemed inclined to do—so dangerous a prisoner to go free, and thereby to tempt God. Behind the Duke he saw the Pope and the Papists, without whom he would never have been able to carry on his campaign. They should at any rate wait and see until the thoughts of hearts should be further revealed. None the less did he warn the victors against self-exaltation and arrogance.

Once more he celebrated his birthday in the circle of his friends, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, Cruciger, and some others. Just before that day a rich present of wine and fish had arrived from the Elector. Luther was very merry with his friends, but could not restrain sad thoughts of an apostasy from the gospel which might follow with many after his death.

At the conclusion of his lecture on November 17 he said: 'This is the beloved Genesis; God grant that after me it may be better done. I can do no more—I am weak. Pray God that He may grant me a good and happy end.' He began no new lectures.

At Christmas time, then, and in the depth of cold, Luther journeyed to Mansfeld with Melancthon. He wished, as he wrote to Count Albert, to risk the time and effort, notwithstanding the pressing work he had on hand, in order to lay himself in peace in his coffin in the place where he had previously reconciled his beloved masters. But his wish was not to be fulfilled. Anxiety for Melancthon, who was ill, urged him home, though he promised to return. On his homeward journey, in spite of the continued severity of the cold, he preached at Halle, concluding his sermon with the words, 'Well, since it is very cold, I will now end. You have other good and faithful preachers.'

He had carefully brought his Melancthon home. When now the new conference on religion was to be held at Ratisbon, and a Wittenberg theologian was to be sent to it, he begged the Elector not to employ his friend again for the 'useless and idle colloquy,' especially as there was not a man among his opponents who was worth anything. 'What would they do,' he wrote, 'if Philip were dead or ill, as indeed he is—so ill that I rejoice to have brought him home from Mansfeld. It is his duty henceforth to spare himself; he is better employed in his bed than at the Conference. The young doctors must come to the fore and take up the word after us.' Of his opponents and their designs, he said 'They take us for asses, who don't understand their vulgar and foolish attacks.'

He described his own condition, in a letter of January 17, in these words: 'Old, spent, worn, weary, cold, and with but one eye to see with.' He must have lost therefore the sight of one of his eyes, but we know nothing definite beyond this. He adds, however, that for his age his health was fairly good.

Melancthon was spared a journey to Ratisbon, as also a third visit to Mansfeld. Luther ventured the latter, however, in January. He took with him his three sons, together with their tutor, and his own servant, that they might become acquainted with his beloved native home. When, shortly before, some students at his table heard of a strange and ominous fall of a large clock at midnight, he said, 'Do not fear; this means that I shall soon die. I am weary of the world, so let us rather part like well-filled guests at a common inn.'

On the 23rd of the month he left Wittenberg, where on

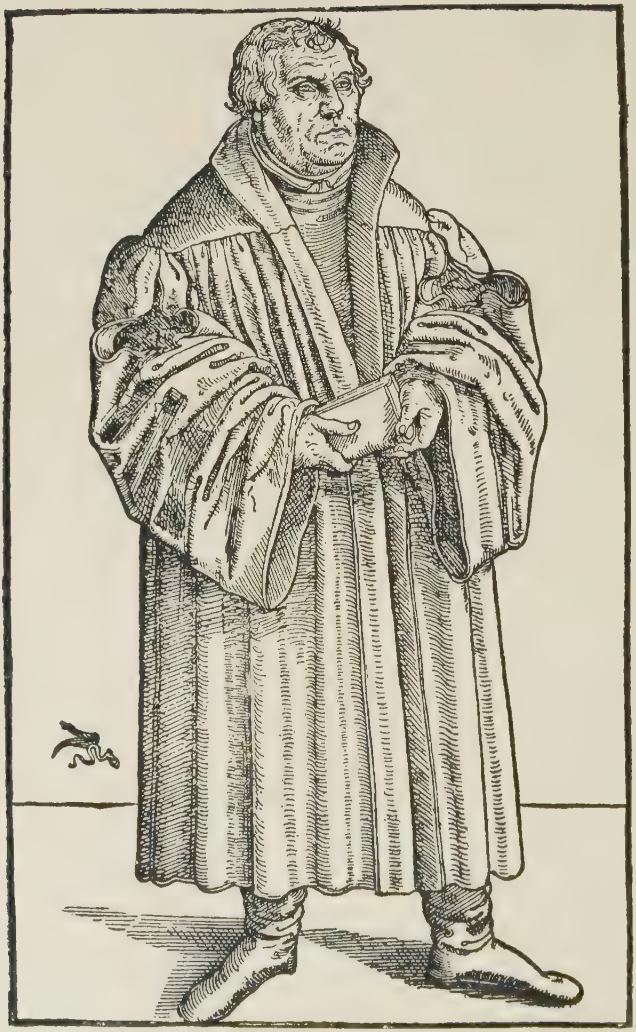

Fig. 54.—Luther in 1546. (From a woodcut of Cranach.)

the previous Sunday, the 17th, he had preached for the last time.

He reached Halle on the 25th, and stayed with Jonas. It was probably then that he brought Jonas as a present the beautiful white Venetian glass, which is still preserved at Nüremberg. The Latin couplet is to this effect:

> Luther this glass, himself a glass, doth on his friend bestow.
> That each himself a brittle glass may by this token know.

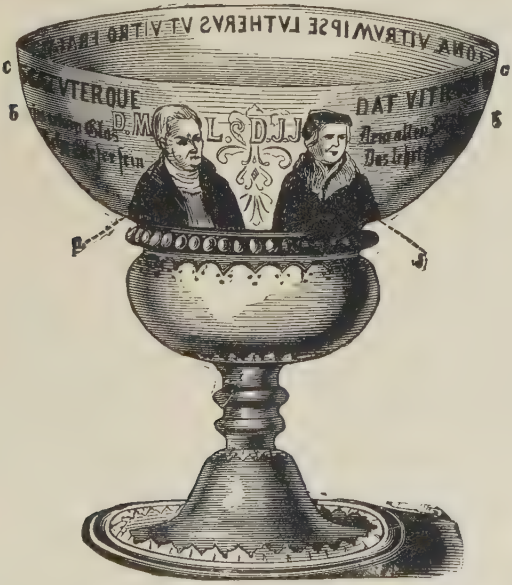

Fig. 55.—Jonas' Glass.

[The date when the portraits of Luther and Jonas, together with the Latin verses and their translation, were executed, is uncertain. (*a*) Luther. (*b b*) Translation of Luther's verses. (*c c*) 'Dat vitrum vitro Jonæ vitrum ipse Lutherus: Ut vitro fragili similem se noscat uterque.' (*d*) Jonas.]

The breaking up of the ice, followed by heavy floods, detained him at Halle for three days. The very day after his arrival he preached again. He wrote to his wife telling her he was cheering himself with good Torgau beer and Rhine-wine, till the Saale had done raging. To his friends, however, in company he said, 'Dear friends, we are mighty good comrades, we eat and drink together; but we must all die one day. I am now going to Eisleben to help my masters, the Counts of Mansfeld, to come to terms. Now I know how the people are disposed; when Christ wished to reconcile His heavenly Father with mankind, He undertook to die for them. God grant that it may be so with me!'

On the 28th the travellers, who were joined by Jonas, crossed the dangerous rapids formed by the narrow part of the river Saale below the Castle of Giebichenstein, near the town, and thus on the same day reached Eisleben, where the Counts of Mansfeld, with several other nobles, were waiting for Luther. An escort of more than a hundred horsemen in heavy armour accompanied him from the frontier between the territories of Halle and Mansfeld. Just before entering the town, however, he was seized with alarming giddiness and faintness, together with a sharp constriction of the heart, and much difficulty of breathing. He himself ascribed this to a chill, having shortly before walked some distance and then re-entered his carriage in a perspiration. At the village of Rissdorf, near Eisleben, so he wrote to his wife on February 1, such a bitter wind pierced his cap at the back of his head, that he felt as if his brain were freezing. It was in this letter that he spoke of her laughingly as Lady Zulsdorf, &c. 'But now,' he added, 'thank God, I am pretty well again, except for the heartache caused by the beautiful women.' Only three days after this attack he preached at Eisleben.

Luther was comfortably quartered at the Drachstedt, a house which had been bought by the town-council, and was inhabited by the town-clerk Albert.

The business was commenced at once, in the very house where he was staying. But it was a work of much trouble and difficulty for Luther. He sought one way after another to effect a reconciliation. On February 6 he begged the Elector through Melancthon to send him a summons back to Wittenberg, in order to put pressure on the Counts to settle their dispute; and a few days after he wrote to his wife, saying that he should like to grease his carriage-wheels and be off in sheer anger, but concern for his native town prevented him. He was shocked at the avarice, so ruinous to the soul, which either party displayed. He was angry also with the lawyers, for backing up each party to stand so stubbornly on his imagined rights. He who now ought to have been a lawyer himself, came among them as a hobgoblin, who checked their pride by the grace of God.

The multitude of Jews whom Luther met at Eisleben and thereabouts were also an annoyance and vexation to him. He disliked to see the Counts give room so far to men who blasphemed Jesus and Mary, who called the Christians changelings, and sucked them dry, nay, would gladly kill them all, if they could. He warned even his congregation, as a child of their country, not to fall into their meshes.

Amidst all this business, he found time to preach four sermons. He partook twice of the sacrament, and confessed and ordained two clergymen.

To his wife, who worried herself constantly about him and his health, he wrote from Eisleben five times in fourteen days.[1] His language to her, even when he has unplea-

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[1] A facsimile of the longest of these letters, bearing date February 7, runs as follows: 'Mercy and peace in the Lord. Pray read, dear Katie, the Gospel of St. John and the' [*marginally* 'little'] 'Catechism, of which you once declared that you yourself had said all that it contained. For you wish to disquiet yourself about your God, just as if He were not Almighty, and able to create ten Martin Luthers for one old one drowned perhaps in the Saale, or fallen dead by the fireplace, or on Wolf's fowling-floor. Leave me in peace with your cares; I have a better protector than you and all the angels. He—my Protector—lies in the manger, and hangs upon a Virgin's breast. But He sits also at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. Rest, therefore, in peace. Amen.

'I think that hell and all the world must now be free of all the devils sant news to tell, is always full of affection, heartiness, and comfort. The humorous way in which he addressed her we have noticed before. He told her how well he fares with eating and drinking. He referred her to her God, in Whose stead she wished to care for him, to the Bible and the small Catechism, of which she had once declared that all it contained had been said by her. He

who have come together here to Eisleben, for my sake it seems. So hard and knotty is this business. There are fifty Jews here too' [*marginally* 'in one house'], 'as I wrote to you before. It is now said that at Rissdorff, hard by Eisleben, where I fell ill before my arrival, more than four hundred Jews were walking and riding about. Count Albert, who owns all the country round Eisleben, has seized them upon his property, and will have nothing to do with them. No one has done them any harm as yet. The widowed Countess of Mansfeld (the Countess Dorothea, widow of Count Ernest, born Countess of Solms), is thought to be the protectress of the Jews. I don't know whether it is true, but I have given my opinion in quarters where I hope it will be attended to. It is a case of Beg, Beg, Beg, and helping them. For I had it in my mind to-day to grease my carriage wheels *in irâ meâ*. But I felt the misery of it too much; my native home held me back. I have been made a lawyer, but they will not gain by it. They had better have let me remain a theologian. If I live and come among them, I might become a hobgoblin, who would comb down their pride by the grace of God. They behave as if they were God Himself, but must take care to shake off these notions in good time before their godhead becomes a devilhead, as happened to Lucifer, who could not remain in heaven for pride. Well, God's will be done. Let Master Philip see this letter, for I had no time to write to him; and you may comfort yourself with the thought how much I love you, as you know. And Philip will understand it all.

'We live here very well, and the town-council gives me for each meal half a pint of "Reinfall"' [*marginally*, 'which is very good']. 'Sometimes I drink it with my friends. The wine of the country here is also good, and Naumburg beer is very good, though I fancy its pitch fills my chest with phlegm. The devil has spoilt all the beer in the world with his pitch, and the wine with his brimstone. But here the wine is pure, such as the country gives.

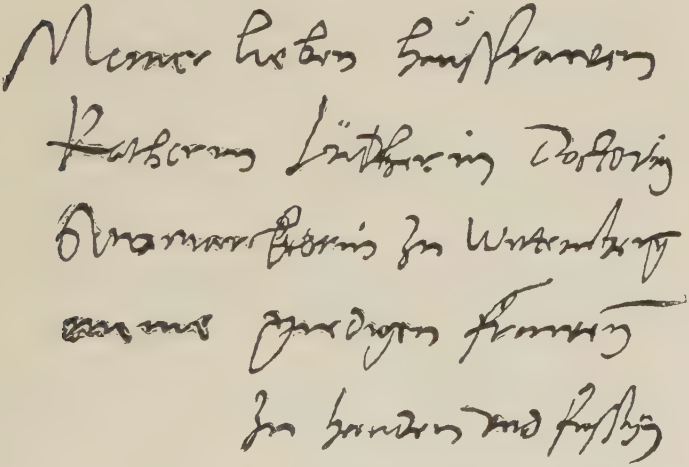
'And know that all letters you have written have arrived, and to-day those have come which you wrote last Friday, together with Master Philip's letters, so you need not be angry.

Sunday after St. Dorothea's Day (7 February) 1546.

'Your loving
'MARTIN LUTHER, D.'

had also dangers to tell her of, which had assailed him even while thus under her care. A fire chanced to break out in a chimney near his room; and on February 9, so he writes to her, notwithstanding all her care, a stone as long as a pillow and as thick as two hands, had nearly toppled down upon his head and crushed him. So he now takes care to say, 'While you cease not to care for us, the earth at length might swallow us up, and all the elements destroy us.'

Luther kept up also at Eisleben his correspondence with Melancthon. He wrote to him three letters, the last testimony of his friendship. A letter to his 'kind, dear housewife,' and one to Melancthon, his 'most worthy brother in Christ,' both of February 14, are without doubt the last he ever wrote. His sick body was well nursed and tended at Eisleben. He went to bed early every night, after he had stood before his window, according to his old habit, in fervent



Meiner lieben Hausfrawen
Katherin Lütherin Doctorin
Saumarckterin zu Wittemberg
meiner gnedigen frawen
zu handen vnd fussen

FIG. 56.—ADDRESS OF LUTHER'S LETTER OF FEBRUARY 7.

('To my beloved housewife, Catharine Lady Luther, Lady Doctor, Lady of the Pigmarket at Wittenberg; my gracious wife, bound hand and foot in loving service.')

prayer. The stone no longer troubled him, but he was very weary and worn. His last sermon, on Sunday, February 14, he broke off with the words: 'This and much more is to be said about the Gospel; but I am too weak, we will leave off here.' Most unfortunately for him, he had omitted to bring with him to Eisleben the applications used for keeping his issue open, and now it was nearly closed. He knew that the physicians considered this extremely dangerous.

At length his efforts to mediate between his masters the Counts were crowned with success beyond all expectation. On February 14 a reconciliation was effected upon the chief points, and the various members of the Counts' families rejoiced, while the young lords and ladies made merry all together. 'Therefore,' wrote Luther to Käthe, 'it must be seen that God is *Exauditor precum*.' He sent her some trout as a thankoffering from Countess Albert. He wrote to her: 'We hope to return home this week, if God will.'

On the 16th and 17th of that month the reconciliation upon all the points of dispute was formally concluded. The revenues of churches and schools were fixed upon, and the latter to this day owe a rich endowment to the arrangements there made. On the 16th Luther says in his 'Table Talk': 'I will now no longer tarry, but set myself to go to Wittenberg and there lay myself in a coffin and give the worms a fat doctor to feed upon.'

On the morning of the 17th, however, the Counts found themselves compelled, by Luther's state of health, to entreat him not to exert himself any longer with their affairs; and so he only added his signature where required. To Jonas and the Counts' court-preacher Cölius, who were staying with him, he said he thought he should remain at Eisleben, where he was born. Before supper he complained of oppression of the chest, and had himself rubbed with warm cloths. This relieved him, and he left his little room, going down the staircase into the public room to join the party at supper. 'There is no pleasure,' he said, 'in being alone.' At supper he was merry with the rest, and talked with his usual energy on various subjects—now jocular or serious, now intellectual and pious. But no sooner had he returned to his chamber and finished his usual evening prayer than he again became anxious and troubled. After being rubbed again with warm cloths and having taken a medicine which Count Albert himself had brought him, he laid himself down about nine o'clock on a leathern sofa and slept gently for an hour and a half. On awakening, he arose, and with the words (spoken in Latin) 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, Thou God of truth,' went to his bed in the adjoining room, where he again slept, breathing quietly, till one o'clock. He then awoke, called his servant, and begged him to heat the room, though it was quite warm already, and then exclaimed to Jonas, 'O Lord God, how ill I am! Ah! I feel I shall remain here at Eisleben, where I was born and baptized.' In this state of pain he arose, walked without assistance into the room which he had left a few hours before, again commending his soul to God; and then, after pacing once up and down the room, lay down once more on the sofa, complaining again of the oppression on his chest. His two sons, Martin and Paul, remained with him all night. They had spent most of the time at Mansfeld with their relations there, but had now returned to their father (Hans was still absent), and his servant and Jonas. Cölius also hastened to him, and the young theologian John Aurifaber, a friend of the two Counts who used to associate with Luther together with Jonas and Cölius. The town-clerk was there, too, with his wife, also two physicians, and Count Albert and his wife, who busied herself zealously with nursing the sick man; and later on came a Count of Schwarzburg with his wife, who were staying on a visit with the Count of Mansfeld. The rubbing and application of warm cloths and the medicines were now of no avail to ease Luther's anguish. He broke out into a sweat. His friends began to feel more happy about him, hoping that this would relieve him; but he replied, 'It is the cold sweat of death; I shall yield up my spirit.' Then he began to give thanks aloud to God, Who had revealed to him His Son, Whom he had confessed and loved, and Whom the godless and the Pope blasphemed and insulted. He cried aloud to God and to the Lord Jesus: 'Take my poor soul into Thy hands! Although I must leave this body, I know that I shall be ever with Thee.' He then spoke words of the Bible, three times uttering the text of St. John iii.: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' After Cölius had given him one more spoonful of medicine, he said again, 'I am going, and shall render up my spirit,' and three times rapidly in succession he said in Latin, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.' From that time he remained quite still, and closed his eyes, without making any answer when spoken to by those around him, who were busy with restoratives. Jonas and Cölius, however, after his pulse had been rubbed with strengthening waters, said aloud in his ear: 'Reverend father (*Reverende pater*), wilt thou stand by Christ and the doctrine thou hast preached?' He uttered an audible 'Yes.' He then turned upon his right side and fell asleep. He lay thus for nearly a quarter of an hour, when his feet and nose grew cold; he fetched one deep, even breath, and was gone. It was between two and three o'clock in the morning of February 18— a Thursday.

The body was laid in a white garment, first upon a bed, and then in a hastily-made leaden coffin. Many hundreds, high and low, came to see it. The next morning the face was painted by an Eisleben artist, and the morning after that by Lucas Fortenagel of Halle. Fortenagel's portrait is no doubt a foundation of all those which we find in several places under Cranach's name, and which no doubt really came from Cranach's studio.

The Elector John Frederick at once insisted that the mortal remains of Luther should rest at Wittenberg. The Counts of Mansfeld wished at least to pay them the last honours. After they had been brought, on the afternoon of the 19th, into the Church of St. Andrew, where a sermon was preached by Jonas that day, and another by Cölius on the following morning, a solemn procession started at noon on the 20th, with the coffin, for its destination. In front rode a troop of about fifty light-armed cavalry, with sons of both the Counts, to accompany the body to its last resting-place. All the Counts and Countesses, with their guests, followed as far as the gates of Eisleben, and among them was a Prince of Anhalt, the magistrates, the school-children, and the whole population of the surrounding country.

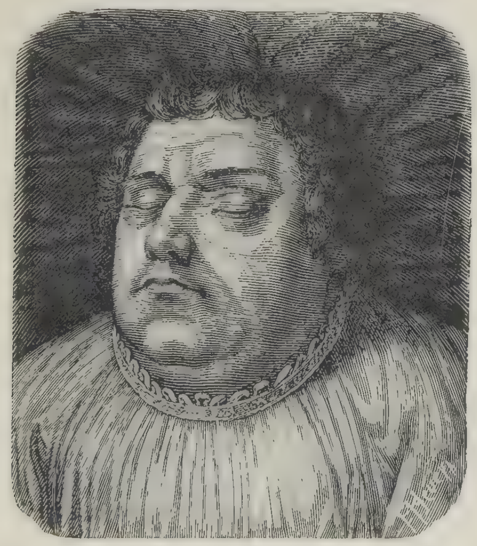


Fig. 57.—Luther after Death. (From a picture ascribed to Cranach.)

In all the villages on the road the bells tolled, and old and young flocked to join the procession. At Halle the coffin was received with great solemnity, and placed for the night of the 20th in the principal church of the town. There a cast was taken in wax, which is preserved in the library of the church; the original features, however, having been altered by putting in the eyes and improving the shape of the mouth. To complete our picture of Luther's outward appearance, we have in this cast the remarkably strong brow, which in Cranach's portraits of Luther often recedes out of all proportion in his upturned

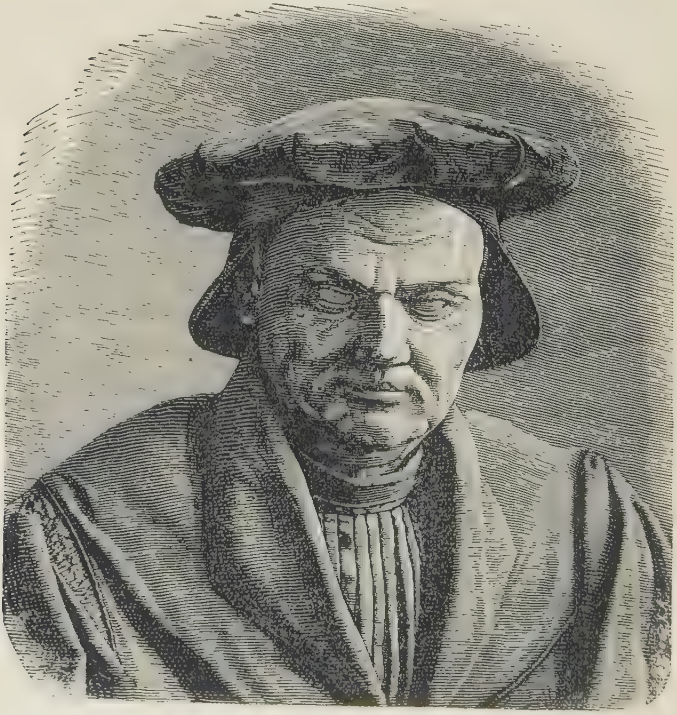


Fig. 58.—Cast of Luther after Death. (At Halle.)

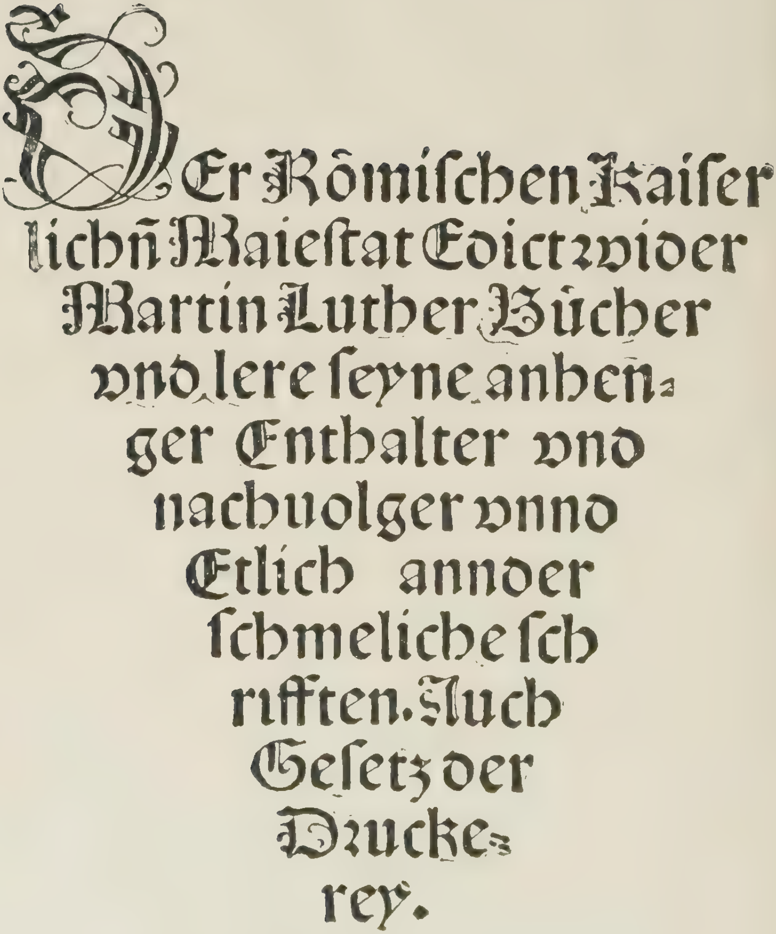
face. The two representations of Luther when dead are of great value, deeply as it must be lamented that no more skilful hands than those of the painter of Halle and the wax-modeller have had the privilege of working upon them.

On the 21st the corpse was taken to Kemberg, after being received at the frontier of the Electorate by deputies from the Elector. On the morning of the 22nd it reached Wittenberg, where it was at once taken to the Castle Church in solemn procession through the whole length of the town. It was a long, sad procession. First went the nobles representing the Elector, then the horsemen from Mansfeld and their young Counts, and immediately after the coffin the widow in a little carriage with some other gentlewomen. Then followed Luther's sons and his brother James, with other relatives from Mansfeld; then the University, the members of the Town Council, and all the citizens of Wittenberg. In the church Bugenhagen preached a sermon, and Melancthon, who, on the arrival of the sad news, had expressed his grief in a charge to the students, gave a Latin oration as representative of the University. Then, near the spot where the great Reformer had once nailed up his theses, the body was lowered into the grave.

Throughout the whole Evangelical Church arose a cry of lamentation. Luther was mourned as a prophet of Germany —as an Elijah who had overthrown the worship of idols and set up again the pure Word of God. Like Elisha to Elijah, so Melancthon called out after him, 'Alas! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!' On the other hand, fanatical Papists were not ashamed to insult his very deathbed with slanders and falsehoods; even a year before he died a silly, sensational story of his death was spread about by them.

Luther throughout his life and labours had never troubled himself much about the praise or the abuse of men. After the example of his great teacher St. Paul, he went his way in honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, along the road which he knew to be pointed out from above. The portrait of his life, plain and unadorned as it is presented to the present age, will at any rate testify to the worth of this great man, and thus do something towards that eternal end for which he was ready to sacrifice his life and, in the eyes of the world, his honour and his fame.

APPENDIX.



DEr Rômiſchen Kaiſer
lichñ Maieſtat Edict wider
Martin Luther Bůcher
vnd lere ſeyne anhen=
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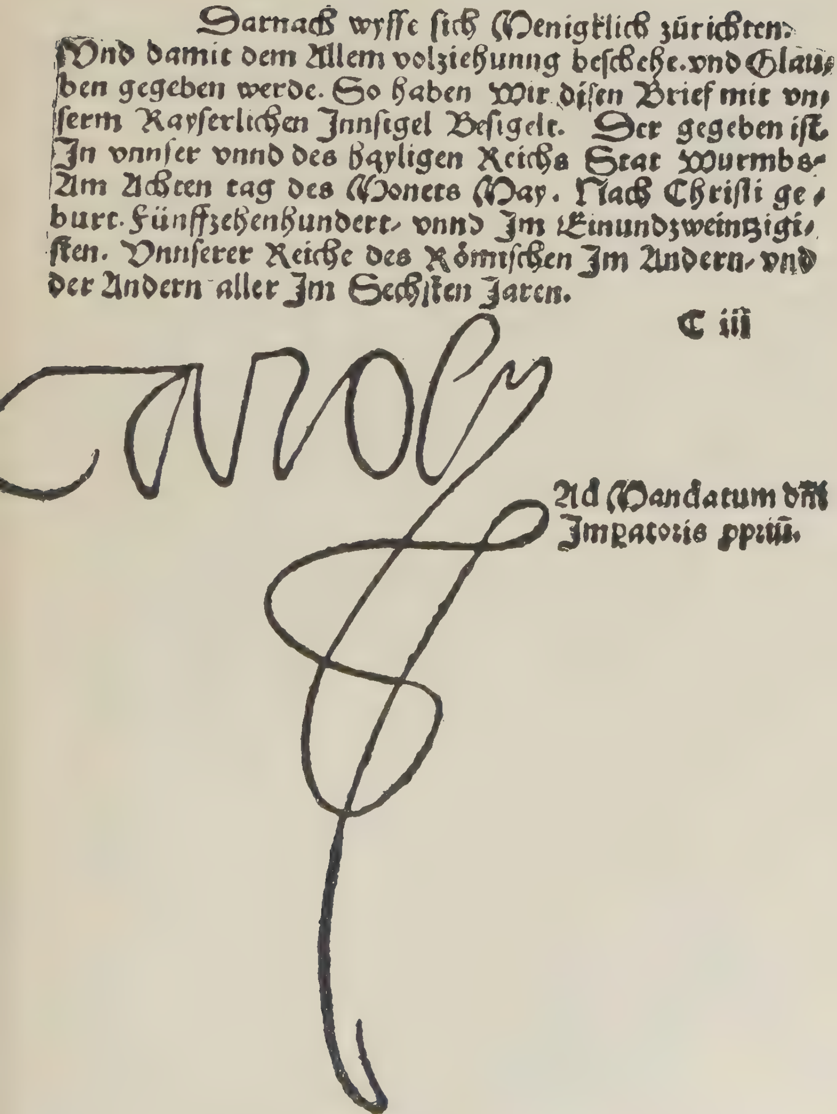
Facsimile of part of the Edict of Worms, 8 May (1521), being the



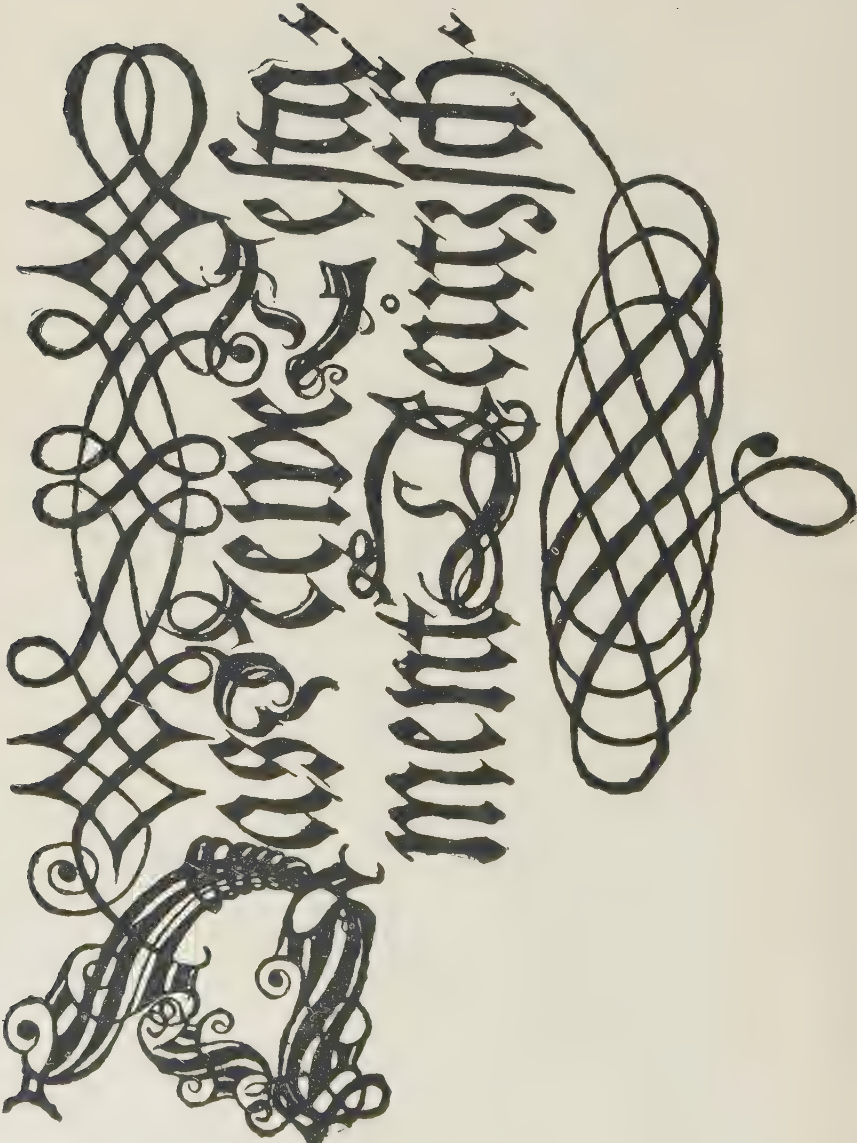
Darnach wyſſe ſich Menigklich zůrichten. Vnd damit dem Allem volziehung beſchehe. vnd Glauben gegeben werde. So haben Wir diſen Brief mit vnſerm Kayſerlichen Innſigel Beſigelt. Der gegeben iſt Jn vnnſer vnnd des hayligen Reichs Stat Wurmbs. Am Achten tag des Monets May. Nach Chriſti geburt. Fünffzehenhundert, vnnd Jm Einundzweintzigiſten. Vnnſerer Reiche des Römiſchen Jm Andern, vnd der Andern aller Jm Sechſten Jaren.

C iii

Carolus

Ad Mandatum dñi Imꝑatoris ꝓpriũ.

title and conclusion with the signature of the Emperor Charles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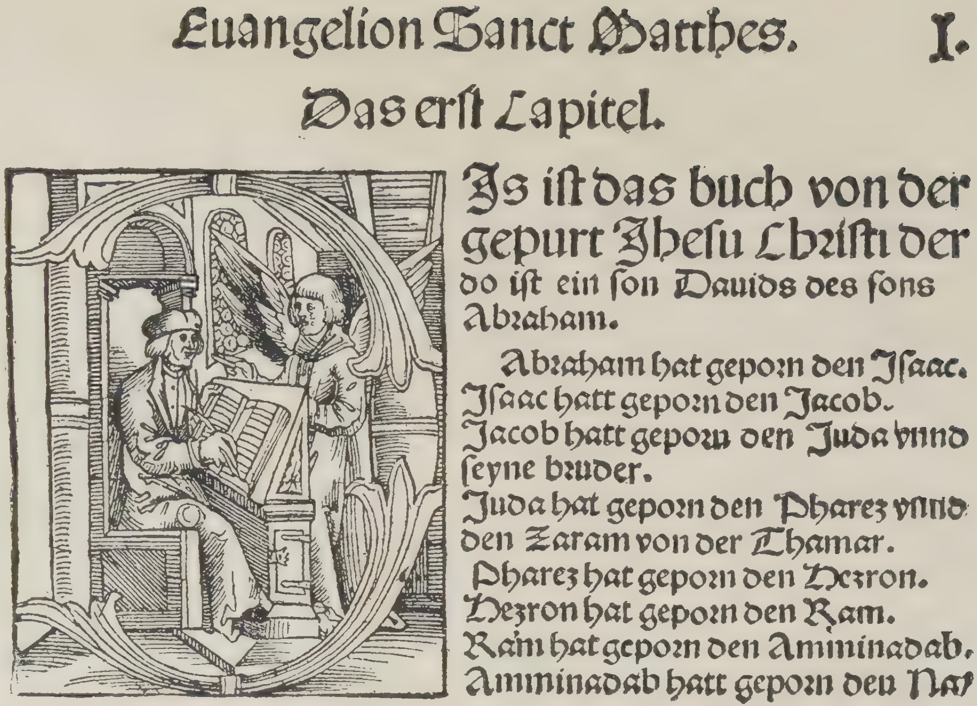

Euangelion Sanct Matthes. I.

Das erſt Capitel.

Js iſt das buch von der gepurt Jheſu Chriſti der do iſt ein ſon Dauids des ſons Abraham.

Abraham hat geporn den Jſaac.
Jſaac hatt geporn den Jacob.
Jacob hatt geporn den Juda vnnd ſeyne bruder.
Juda hat geporn den Pharez vnnd den Zaram von der Thamar.
Pharez hat geporn den Hezron.
Hezron hat geporn den Ram.
Ram hat geporn den Amminadab.
Amminadab hatt geporn den Na-

Title and Commencement of the Gospel of St. Matthew, in the first Edition of the New Testament, 1522.
(From the original in the Royal Public Library at Stuttgart.)

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